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HOMAGE TO

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Mulk Raj Anand

Kramrisch

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KHAJURAHO

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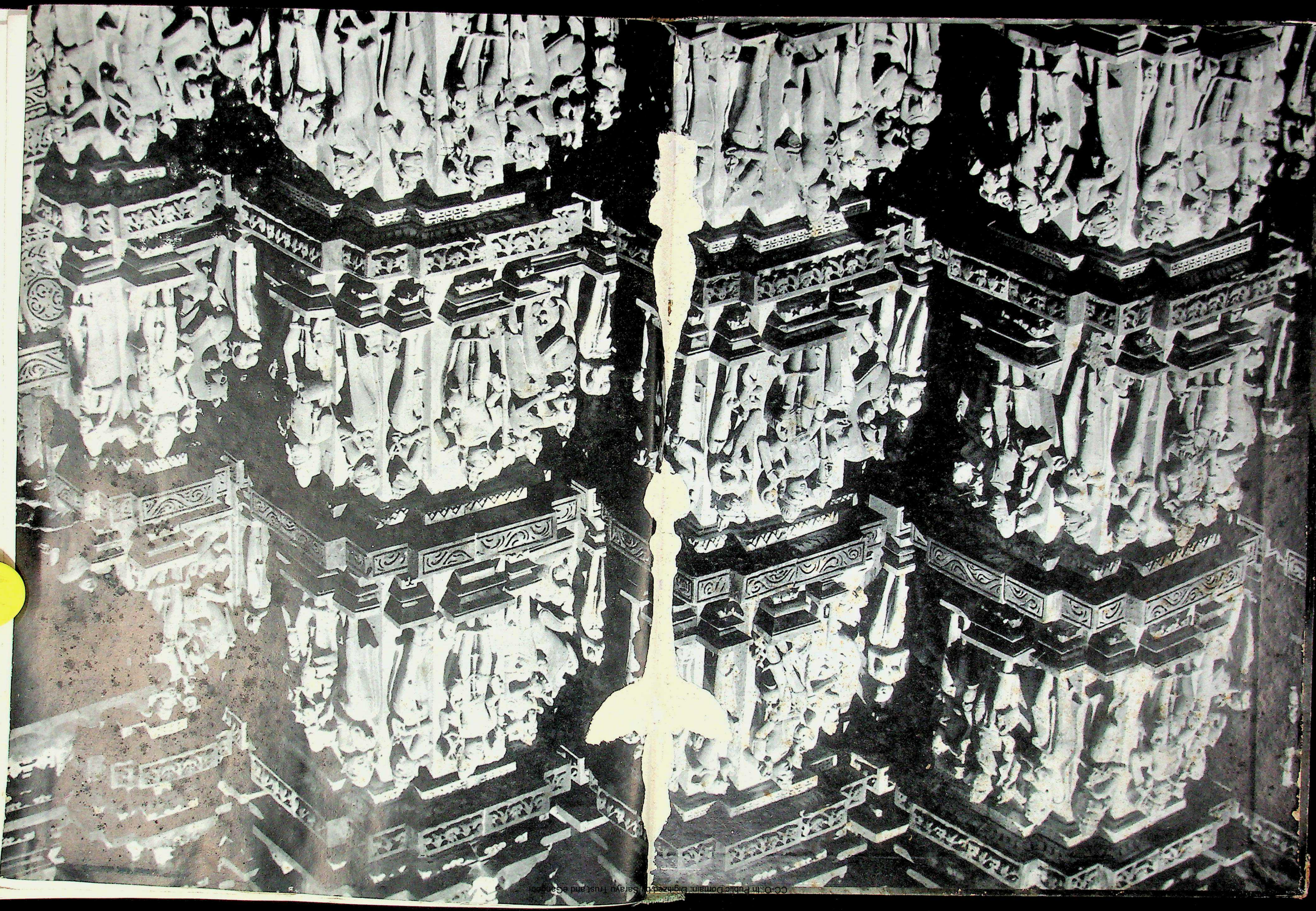

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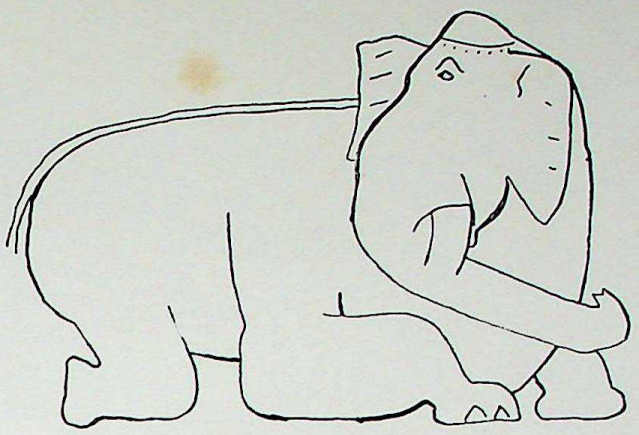

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Homage to Khajuraho

TEXT BY

Mulk Raj Anand
Stella Kramrisch

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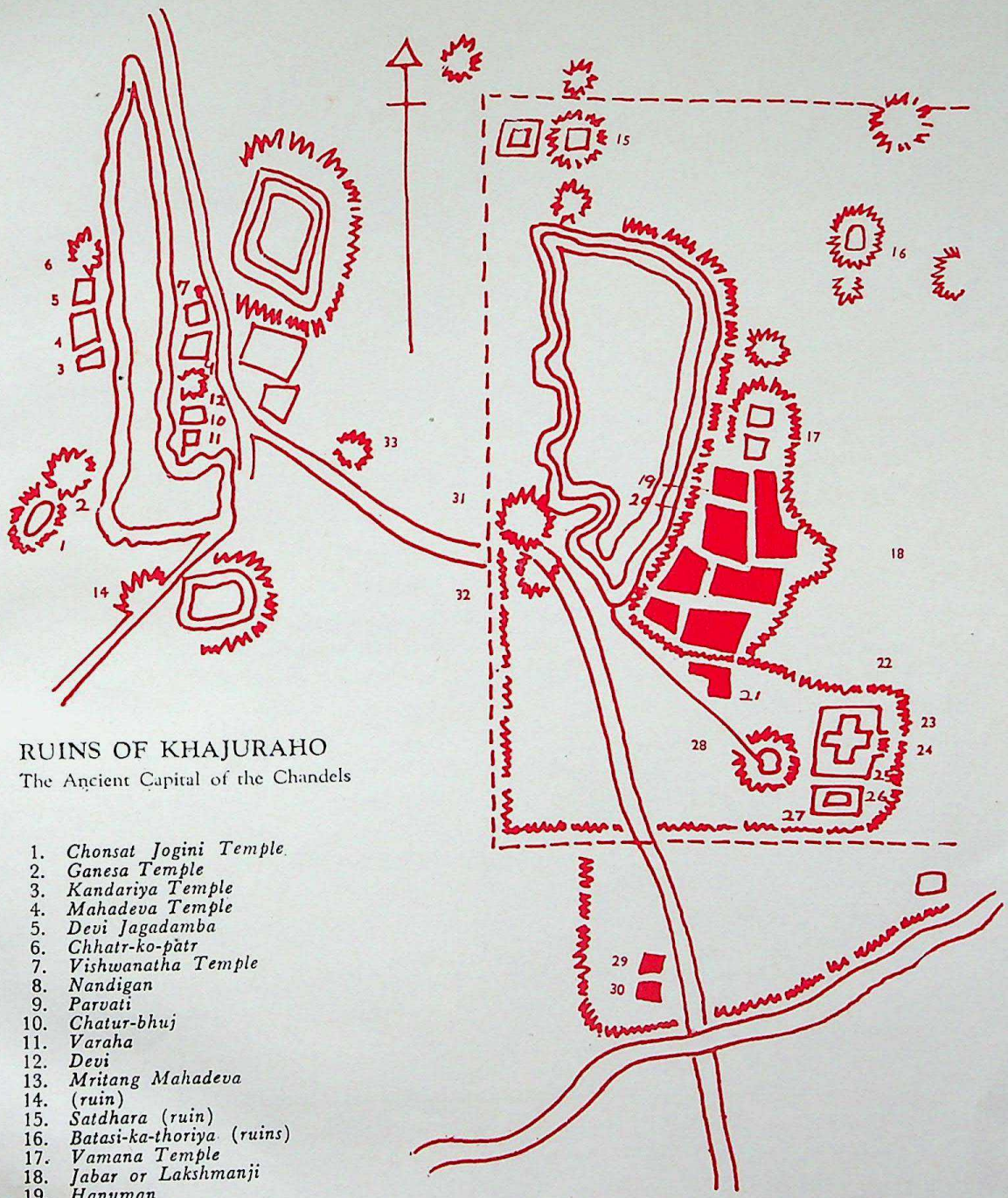

RUINS OF KHAJURAHO

The Ancient Capital of the Chandels

1. *Chonsat Jogini Temple*
2. *Ganesa Temple*
3. *Kandariya Temple*
4. *Mahadeva Temple*
5. *Devi Jagadamba*
6. *Chhatr-ko-pàtr*
7. *Vishwanatha Temple*
8. *Nandigan*
9. *Parvati*
10. *Chatur-bhuj*
11. *Varaha*
12. *Devi*
13. *Mritang Mahadeva*
14. *(ruin)*
15. *Satdhara (ruin)*
16. *Batasi-ka-thoriya (ruins)*
17. *Vamana Temple*
18. *Jabar or Lakshmanji*
19. *Hanuman*
20. *Brahma*
21. *Ganthai*
22. *Parswanatha*
23. *Adinatha*
24. *Parswanatha*
25. *Jinanatha*
26. *Sethanatha*
27. *Adinatha*
28. *(high mound)*
29. *Nilakantha Mahadeva*
30. *Kunwar Math*

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Homage to Khajuraho

by Mulk Raj Anand

Certainly Khajuraho represents one of the highest and most intense moments of the Mediaeval Hindu Renaissance.

This moment lasted nearly a hundred years, when the Chandela Rajput kings conquered the Vindhya Pradesh, and ruled there from 950-1050 A.D. But, actually, this moment must be reckoned in relation to some moments which preceded it and the many others which followed. For the temples of Khajuraho are the development of those elements of architecture and sculpture of the Gupta Golden age, which had already begun to be carved out in great profusion in the vast realms of the rich imperial dynasty that almost united India for the second time in its history since Asoka Maurya.

In the Gupta shrines, the architecture of the temple, with its large plinth, the main hall and the inner sanctum, surrounded by a gallery for circumambulation, had already emerged as a basic prototype. And the symbolism through which the lofty aspirations of man towards God rose above the Sikhara from the lower earth, was understood. The adumbration of the moods and attitudes of the worshippers towards the celestial spirits and the Gods, through the sculpture of fantasy, had, however, just begun, so that architecture was still dominant and sculpture played a subsidiary role.

The transition from the Gupta styles to the works of the Mediaeval Hindu Renaissance represents, therefore, not so much an innovation of type, but the shifting of emphasis to image making as the necessary and important part of architecture.

In fact, in the new scheme, sculpture becomes dominant and the whole temple begins to look like a giant carving, reaching upto the heavens, with detailed embellishment of Gods and Goddesses and celestial beauties and human beings and animals, in an intricate array of the metaphysical story of creation, where there is no beginning and no end.

This triumph of sculpture over architecture, which is witnessed so dramatically in Khajuraho, is to dominate the whole mediaeval tradition from Central and Eastern India to the South, until well into the eighteenth century.

The evolution is organic.

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The thousand year old Buddhist tradition was dying in the hands of a clergy which had removed itself from contact with its lay followers by amassing tremendous wealth for the monks, who offered little solace, or ritualistic service, at birth, marriage and death. The Hindus, who had fought a rearguard action against the unitarian logic of the Buddhists and the Jains, now sought to absorb into renascent Hinduism the most tender humanistic aspects of both the rival religions. And, with a genius for appreciating the subtle nuances of psychology, with which they had conceded 'ideas to the learned and images of wood and stone to the ignorant', the Brahmins penetrated into each tender impulse and emotion of the human heart and consecrated it in poetry, or stone, as a part of the worship of God. "The Divine and the human forms", says the Matsya Purana, *"are born of one parent"... "The Divine form is endowed with more* buddhi. *The human form is not so well endowed..." "The worshipper who attains knowledge of* Brahman *is attended by five hundred celestial damsels—one hundred carrying scented powders, saffron, turmeric and the like in their hands, one hundred carrying fruits, one hundred carrying various ornaments, garlands. They adorn him with ornaments befitting* Brahman *himself. Thus adorned with Brahma ornaments and knowing* Brahman, *he goes to* Brahman".

Of course, these allegorical explanations offer the kind of metaphor through which the most intimate and secular of impulses can be given their due place in the classical order of the ascending series of Reality. The murti (*image*) *itself is the wife of* Dharma, *which is the order of things in the cosmos and righteousness in man. And it is Form, luminous and charming* (Maushara). *Without the image, the supreme spirit* (Paramatman), *whose abode is the whole universe, would be without support. And if she is playing with a ball, is she not Vishnu disguised in the form of Mohini, the enchantress, who succeeds in deceiving the demons out of their share of immortality? And, if, in her incarnation as Mohini, she looks into a mirror, does it not show her powers of absorption in her own being and the pleasure of the sense of 'I-ness'* (Ahamkara) *which causes delusion and by which the enchantress, self-enchanted, makes the titans forget their egoity? And, again, if she is taking the thorn out of her foot, with the innocence of a peasant girl, is she not extracting pain out of the flesh and taking the body towards divine grace? Even if she stands shyly with her hand shading her eyes, or plays the flute, or is putting on the* gunghroo *before the dance, she is a celestial beauty, one of the lovely women of the Gods (Suranam Sundaryah), mentioned by Raja Bhoj in his treatise on Architecture, as one of the host of superhuman figures on the wall of the Mount Meru, the foremost type of all temples.*

And yet, and yet, she must have been, even in that time of spiritual fervour, not only one woman but many women.

It is true that these temples of Khajuraho cannot be explained except as part of the manifestation of the Siva-Sakti cult, which was spreading, with the amalgam of Sun-worship brought by the Kushans, and Naga and tree worship emerging from the people below, from Central India towards Orissa and Bengal and across the Peninsula to West and South, to meet other alloys of resurgent Hinduism.

But the impulse obviously came from a dynasty who wished to outmatch the splendrous remains of the kingdom of Kanauj, founded by Sree Harsa. It is likely that, inured to war, and hunt, and

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demanding the loyalty of a peasantry which had inherited many Dravidian forms of worship, the Chandela kings absorbed the magical rites and practices of the local population.

The setting for the Khajuraho capital seems to have been paradisal: Surrounded by low lying hills, in the midst of lush forests with a river flowing past the town, here was the place where the great gods could be invoked and the power of the feudal state protected, against all comers. The capital is said to have been surrounded by walls of which only the vaguest foundations are now visible. The palaces have disappeared, even as eighty of the temples have mixed with the dust and the stones. The populace must have lived in the barest hovels and, presumably, the present squalid, ramshackle village survives on the old site. But many large tanks in Bundelkhand give us a clue to the method by which the Chandels brought prosperity to the land and explains, to some extent, the surplus harvests on which the magnificent temples were raised.

A posthumous panegyric of 1002 A.D. engraved in stone in the Vishwanatha Temple, in one of the surviving seven temples, celebrates King Dhanga, under whose rule this temple was built. So it is clear that the Chandelas endowed all the temples, with their entourage of priests and devadasis. Conjecture, myth and speculation will always, in the absence of historical documentation, weave ever new webs to explain the miraculous appearance, all in a hundred years, of a belief in the life force so potent as is reflected on the walls, as also the presence of so many lovely women, transformed into Surasundaris, *by the sensitive chisels of the craftsmen.*

Some say that the most beautiful women were brought from Magadha, Malwa and Rajputana to be trained as devadasis in the Khajuraho temples. And it is alleged further that as these devadasis were lonely women, dedicated to the ceremonies of the Gods, there is no evidence of children on the walls. 'So much love, so many lovely flowers but no fruit!' Other people say that the Gods and Surasundaris *who cover the interiors and the exteriors of the temples, were taken from real life and put there against the stylised Gods and Goddesses of the higher reaches.*

All these suggestions seem naive in the face of the available information about the power of the Chandelas and the public works they built and the plenty that they were able to create during the short century before their dynasty was crushed by a contiguous Rajput rival. And as long as the Chandelas held sway life abounded, and a rich civilisation presumably grew on the pattern of the earlier Gupta court, and poetry, architecture and sculpture flourished, in the wake of Saivism, assembling priests and devadasis and devotees and craftsmen and slave labour enough for generations.

Similarly, the shocked indignation of the present day puritans withers away, if we consider the Khajuraho group of temples as part of the religious and cultural movement, which was already in fermentation under the Guptas and which was only heightened in the early mediaeval period, before entering on a new phase after the Muhammadan conquest. We must remember that, from the Vedic period onwards, the belief in the universe as the outcome of the cosmic union between the male and the female had been a fundamental aspect of the Hindu faith. And, from the Atharva Veda *downwards, hundreds of texts had been written on the elaboration of the play function of sex within the scheme admitted by Hindu religion. The* Kama Sutra *of Vatsayana was only a later recension of previous erotic literature. In the highly charged poetry of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, the warm sensuality of an age, which knew*

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the quick of the sun and the warmth of human desire, had sunk into the consciousness of the well-to-do nobility and the intelligentsia. The full life, for some at least, was, presumably, the familiar background of existence rather than the aberration which it seems today. That nothing is alone in Nature but must merge with its counterpart to find perfection in Union, being the accepted religious practice, there may have been cults which permitted the initiation of young virgins in the tendernesses of conjugal love. And there is no reason to wonder why, if for centuries afterwards, illustrated editions of books of love could pass from hand to hand, there could not be the carved love poses, mentioned by Vatsayana, on the panels of the main shrines.

There is nowhere among the surviving erotic reliefs of Khajuraho any vulgarity if one brings to the sculptures the warmth of the heart rather than the cold stare of obscene inquiry or the furtive gaze of a later, more cynical and weary, age. Whether it is the withdrawn look on the faces of the modest women attendants, helping in the ceremonies of love, or the unselfconscious embraces of the mithuna *couples, the bodies of the persons involved are like the graceful curves of those in whom passion has become incarnate. In most cases, the man is tender and contemplative, folding his beloved with the most devoted protection and love, while the woman is looking up, as though reaching out with all her body and soul towards the gracious bent head of the lover. Seldom do the faces reflect mere animal lust, as though the artisan always remembered the spiritual values of which the naked physical connection was merely the expression.*

The miracle of the whole group of the temples, however, is the serene accomplishment of the carvings themselves. Surely the ten or twelve outstanding sculptures of Khajuraho must be numbered among the many masterly sculptures of India. There had been greater carving in the early mediaeval temples of Ellora and Elephanta under the Rastrakutas, and some of the finest sculpture in Utkal was to follow, but there is enough here to go into the imaginary museum of world art of André Malraux. Not all the images are of equal value, except that the whole series seem to be part of a flood of activity which sustained itself on the high watermark for generations. The plastic elements derived from that unnaturalistic tradition, built on the creative image (dhyana mantra), *which abstracted from the individualistic characteristics of a figure, a number of traits and recreated them almost as a chrysallis transforms itself into a flower. The formal unity of the temple is maintained here in a compact whole and not through interconnected group of separate buildings. The entrance, the assembly hall, the inner sanctum, are all pre-conceived as a unit, including the sculptures on every tier in the series of ascending planes. Like the Mount Kailas itself, or rather like Mount Meru, the devas and the apsaras stand in an eternity of stone, without the sign of sorrow, except for the figure of death, which also haunts the lower world as an ugly aspect of the same eternity:*

There are certain lines of the poet, W. B. Yeats, which tell of men,

'that with a mallet or a chisel modelled these calculations that look but causal flesh put down: all Asiatic vague immensities.....'

These lines sum up one's feelings about the sculptors,

"who gave women dreams and dreams their looking glass".

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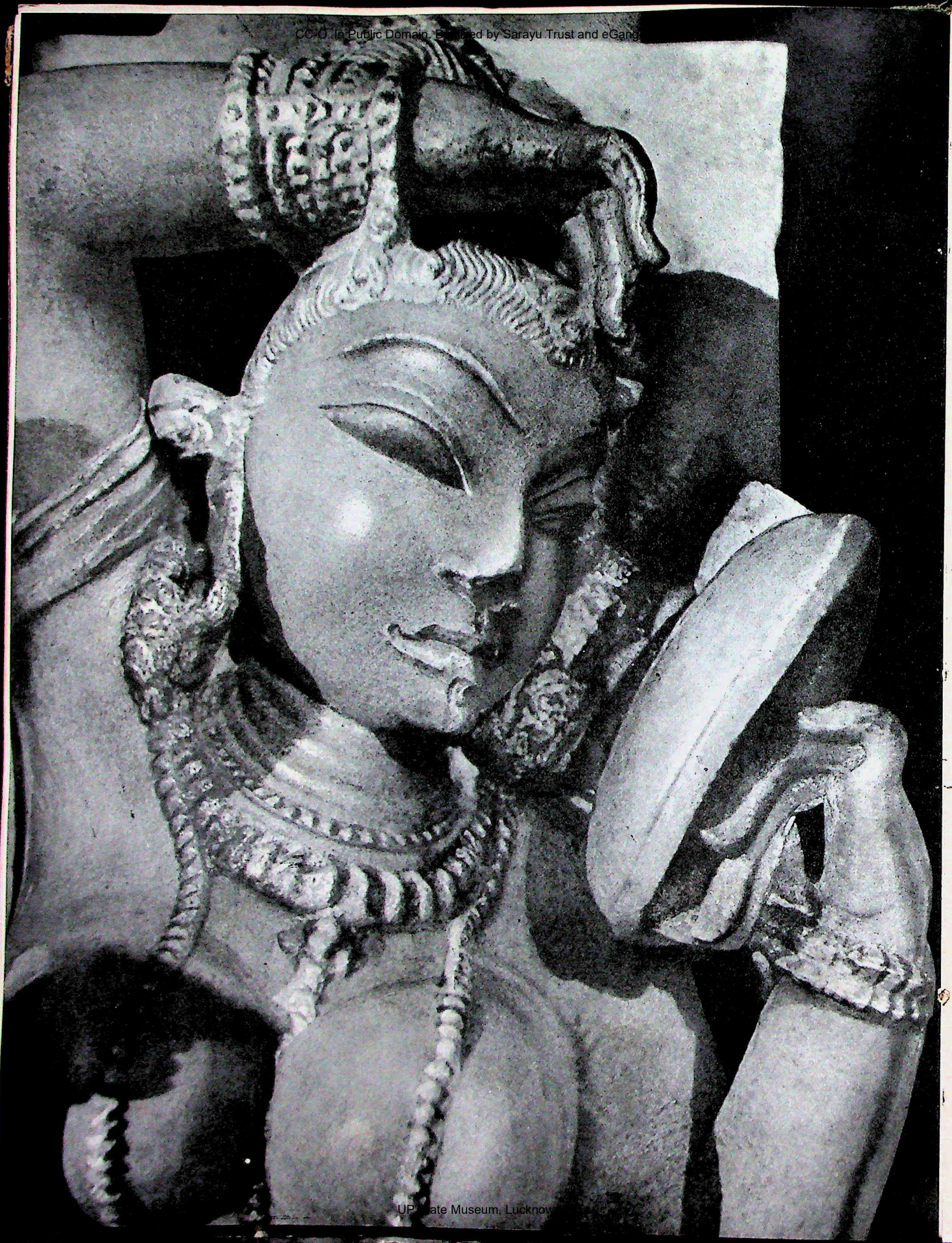

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Reflections on the House and Body of Gods

by Stella Kramrisch

Within about one hundred fifty years, beginning from the middle of the tenth century, the city of Khajuraho, capital of the Chandela dynasty, set up, in about eighty-five temples, its striving for heaven. Their Sikharas arose around a lake, within an area of about eight square miles, effecting a transformation of the level land with its distant hills into a self-contained and man-made scene in which the eighty-five times varied symbolic image of the cosmos—the temple—arose in the vehement ascent of its sloping skyline. Each of these buildings was house and body of God, of Siva, of Vishnu, or Surya, close to each other and similar in plan, elevation and images; each the sum total of meaning in manifestation, differentiated only in name and nature of the central image in the *Garbhagriha*, and its main manifestations or main associate images which occupy the central positions outside on the walls of the *Prasada*. These images are flanked, tier upon tier, by those of the celestial host without particular reference to the specific images. Surasundaris, the beautiful women of the gods, Naginis, the serpent goddesses, Sardulas, the composite mythical lion shapes, and Mithuna groups of male and female figures in union, are placed between the stations held by the Dikpalas, the eight Regents of the directions. These many types of images are the links in the figured belt around the walls of the temple which they surround not once, but thrice, on the larger buildings. They represent the powers which are vested in the temple, the body of divinity, and they shine from the walls in all the moods in which divinity manifested itself then and there.

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Nearly one-half of the twenty still extant buildings are large temples, each equal to a cathedral. The walls of the Kandariya temple, over a hundred feet in length and height, carry nearly nine hundred images. Quantity here shows the intensity of vision; no facet of the wall is without its meaning and each has its figure. The house and body of God is envisaged articulate in all its parts, giving complete exposition of the many ways in which it is approached. They are reflected in the shapes of the images and their form. The form of the images conveys the unique constellation under which the images were beheld inwardly, by the sculptor, and were alive in the consciousness of the people. Their sensibility and religious experience are reflected from the countenances of the images. The order, however, in which these are placed belongs to the total edifice of thought and aspirations towards the ultimate aim of life, towards which also, symbolically, the curves of the Sikhara rise and which is situated beyond the architectural mass of the temple, above where the golden point of the finial is. On the temple, none of the images can be viewed by themselves, although each demands contemplation at the place which is properly its own on the body of the building. No image can be fully understood in its artistic form if taken out of its context.

Architecturally, the images are part of the walls. The walls of an Indian temple are themselves full of meaning. Even before they are built, the single building stones or bricks are invoked as goddesses; they are *Prakriti*, Substance, imbued and pervaded by the Essence; the *Purusa*, who dwells in the temple which is his body and his house. The image, in a Vishnu Temple, or the symbol, in a Temple of Siva, in the last reference—though not iconographically—is also his. They are enshrined in the innermost sanctuary, the *Garbhagriha*. Aspects of the deity to whom the temple is consecrated—or those nearest to him, the *Sakti* of Siva, or Ganesa, his son ; or the *avatars* of Vishnu—as deity in manifestation are imaged outside, on the walls, in the middle of each wall. There they are carried forward on bold piers. These are furthermost projected from the square of the *Garbhagriha*, in the centre of the interior, whence they appear carried by the indwelling power together with their images which come into manifestation across their bulk. Similarly, but duly graded in their lesser projections, are the lateral buttresses, each with its images. In the hierarchy of their meaning the walls of the temple, together with their images, exert their impact on the beholder. They form a dynamic iconostasis which cinctures the innermost sanctuary, exerts its impact, step by step, on the beholder while he circumambulates the temple in a rite of recognition, each image carrying forward to him an aspect, facet, mode and mood of the Divine Presence.

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The overall architectural conception discharges into all the directions of space its central and indwelling meaning. It is envisaged as one colossal sculpture in the round of which each part is integral and refers in its proportions, planes and outline to the total configuration which is motivated from within its centre, in the *Garbhagriha* and, extended in the vertical direction to the point on high where the finial is. By its form, the meaning of the temple is effective on any level of its monumental bulk in all the directions of space.

Manifested from within the compact mass of the walls, the images specify the impact which is articulated in architectural terms by the offsets and mouldings and the canopies and consoles of these figures. These give shape to the power that dwells in the walls, of which they themselves are the ultimate exponents. It is within their limbs and form that this indwelling power expresses itself by means of the shapes of man and animal. They are charged with it and appear transmuted into artistic form exactly at the place which is theirs. The sculptures on the temple walls are empowered by the drive within the plan and substance of the building. Architectural vitality supports their sculptural graces. They are carried by a power beyond that of their merely sculptural existence as single images. Propelled by the indwelling drive of the monumental mass they occupy their places, upheld in the ease of their stances. Stationed on their socles they appear effortless in their balance, absorption and three-dimensional presentation. This refers to their front view, for which they are designed. Viewed from any other angle their high relief has a quality of its own, between monumental mass and figured form. Its appearance varies from that of struts, sketchily adumbrating the shape of the carved limb which they connect with the vertical wall surface, to distortions of the body parts, particularly of the face, and especially if the face is to be seen in profile view. The disparity of the one fully visible half of such a face with the other half which is not meant to be seen but is there as an artistic fact, giving evidence of the forthcoming of the achieved effect, is itself a type or degree of form. It is "form in the becoming", the living process of figured shape detaching itself from the monumental mass of which it forms, and remains, part. Conceptually, this intermediate state of form is an equivalent of the "*Vyaktāvyakta*", the manifest-non-manifest, the transition from potentiality to act.

Subordinated to their monumental context, the images are exposed in the freedom of their movements. This makes their poses and compositions self-contained. Each pillar figure or group, like a creeper around a tree, clings to its

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own axis, in body torsions of unpremeditated wealth. These communicate the innermost secret and sap of each figure or group. They also help in building the coherent volume, the three-dimensional solid form of the sculpture including the space which it occupies between socle and canopy, in front of the wall.

In this, as in every other respect, the sculptures of the buttresses of the Indian temple wall show their import on the other side of the balance, if they are weighed against the images on Gothic facades, where the single figure, as " statue colonne ", is an anthropomorphic disguise of the upward surge of the pillar shape. The Gothic pillar figure adds the expressiveness of its face to the pathos and elation of its pillar-bound, pillar-shaped body in which the ascending architectural movement transcends the vertical extent of the figure.

The images of the temples of Khajuraho are at home and at rest within their movement, carried forward by the impact of the total building which emits from the plain vertical foil of its wall surface the wreaths and cadences of their sensuously modelled bodies, stressed by determined angularities of over-elongated limbs and accentuated by waves and curves of garments and jewellery.

The shapes of the figures are based on those of man and animal. Those of vegetation are reduced to a minimum, transformed into creeper-like trees as frame and companion shapes of the images of tree-goddesses, or else, divested of sculptural roundedness and correspondence to any living shape, the tracery of their scrolls makes symmetrical patterns of abstract appeal foreshadowing the effects of Islamic art in India. The scroll work panels are but few, in Khajuraho, in proportion to the three-dimensional images to which they add their precise and contrasting undertones.

Among the figures based on the shape of man, the female images prevail with their sculptural wealth of more than human curves and amplitude. Related to their themes are those of the Mithuna groups. They hold major positions, and many of them are of large size, as much on the temples of Siva as of Vishnu or Surya. Their meaning had been expressed already in the words of the *Brihadāranyaka Upanisad*, their theme is a perennial figure of Indian thought, is generally called " *Tantrik* " and practised in particular by the Saiva sects of the *Kapalikas* and *Kaulas*. In its anthropomorphic version, it corresponds to the comprehensive architectural theme of the temple, in which dwells as his house and body, the Spirit, enshrined, held and communicated by the embrace of its walls whose substance is *Prakriti* (*Agni Purana* C.1, 13).

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On the approach of the Indian Sculptor to his materials

If one may make a general comment on the approach of the Indian sculptor towards his materials, it is that he is mainly a carver and seldom models on the proportions of what is called "objective reality". Also, most of the carved sculpture is in relief, though, of course, it stands out from the background in rounded forms. And these rounded forms open like flowers from within, in conformity to a subjective picture language (Dhyana mantra) *of symbols, undisturbed by any direct attempt at portraiture or description of material facts. It is "Primitive art" as against "Naturalistic art". It is based mostly on intense feeling and not on visual analysis. It is like the ripening fruit bursting from the pressure of the sap within. It does not treat the stone, or marble, in terms of smaller units, through outside measurements, but relates the pictorial synthesis to the imagined form as a whole. It has little or no relation to "reality as it is", but seeks to communicate the flow of energies and powers, through symbols, by the relation of masses. It does not concern itself with concavities but with curves and convexes. The sculptor is forever trying to realise the unity of his ego with the icon by chiselling forms as a rhythmic exercise in space-relations.*

The success or failure of the Indian sculptor is, therefore, not to be judged according to the naturalistic design preferred, unconsciously, by critics like Roger Fry, but rather from design as it may result from the flow in the wells of loneliness, of the unconscious and dream life, in which is situated the paradise where human beings partake of the wild raptures of the gods. M. R. A.

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Little known birds of the inner eye

A little clearing in the heart of the forest of Bundelkhand, surrounded by the lower Vindhyachal mountains, once witnessed the building of a city of the gods, Khajuraho. More than eighty temples came to be built in the first flush of the mediaeval Hindu renaissance, in this centre of the kingdom of the Chandela Rajputs.

In the landscape of the absolute, where the aspirations of humanity rose, across the lofty Sikhara pinnacles, towards the great god Brahman above the skies, the ritual of the ordinary life of man was transformed into thousands of images and symbols of the spiritual life. The littlest and most casual attitude of the daily pastoral existence of the people were carved into panels on the inner and outer walls of the temples. Not even the smallest detail of life escaped the chisel of the master builders, who seem to have made every movement of life into a little known bird of the inner eye, or a winged animal, or a Surasundari—'nymph of Heaven'—or hero, or God.

In the framework of the formal design of the temples, the craftsmen of a thousand years ago thus created the whole cycle of life—perhaps the most humanistic art in our country of the early periods, replete with a tenderness, even as was the poetry of the previous classical renaissance.

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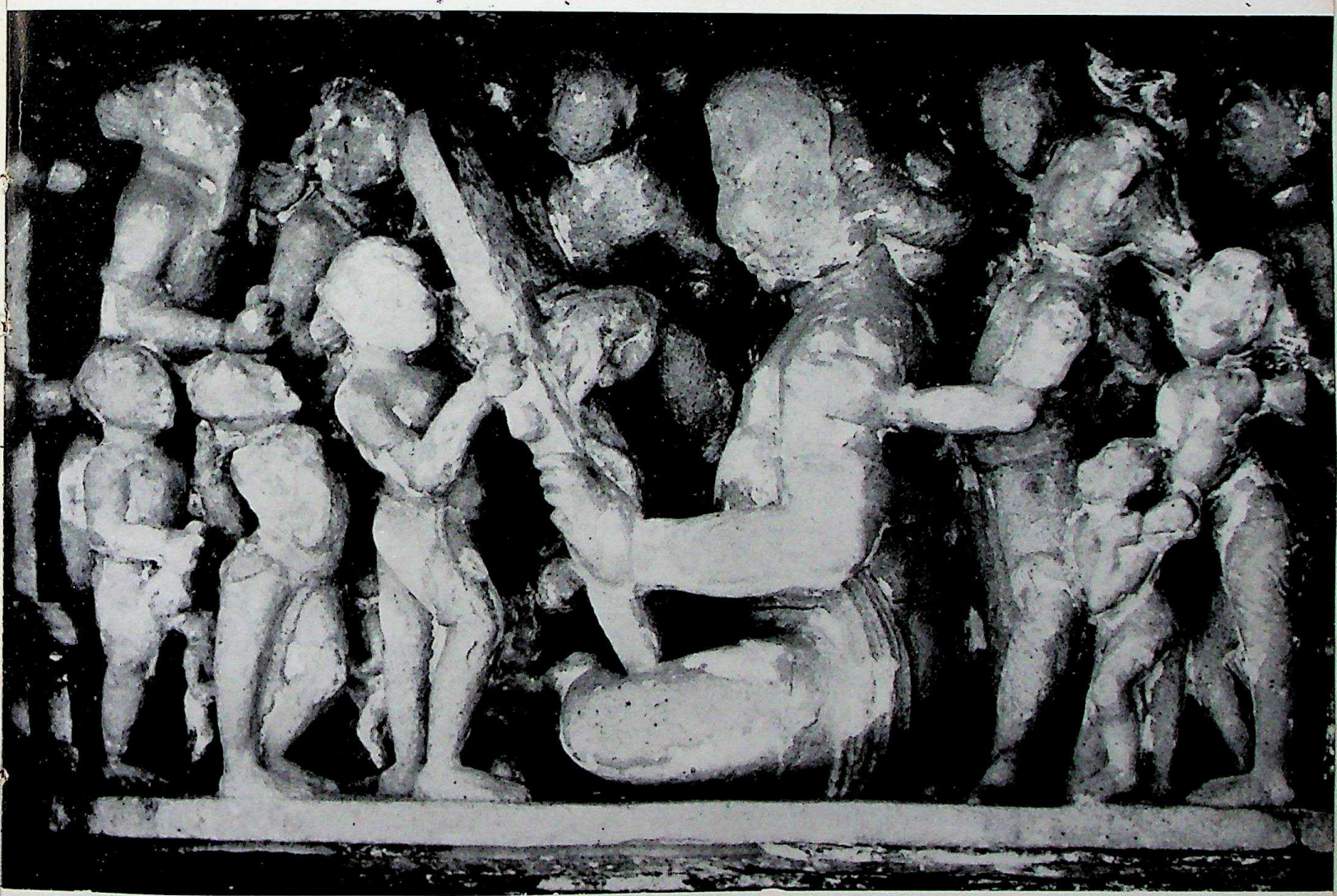
2. *Vishwakarma: Architect of Heaven or Master builder, Attendant shrine of Lakshmana Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*



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Kandariya Mahadeva Temple

Kandariya Mahadeva, is the largest of all the Khajuraho temples, being 109 feet in length and 59½ feet in width externally, with a height of 116½ feet above the ground, or 88 feet above its own floor. Its general plan is similar to that of most of the larger mediaeval temples of Northern India. It has the usual *ardha-mandapa* or portico, the *mandapa* or nave, the *maha-mandapa* or transept, the *antarala* or ante-chamber, and the *garbhagriha* or sanctum each of which has its separate pinnacled roof rising in regular gradation from, the low pyramid of the entrance to the lofty spire of the sanctum. But the interior arrangement differs from the usual construction in having an open passage all round the sanctum, which thus forms a sort of high altar at the inner end of the temple. This open passage also necessitated a change in the exterior arrangement, which, instead of the usual dead walls of the sanctum, has three open porticos at the back and sides similar to those of *maha-mandapa* for the purpose of lighting the passage round the sanctum. By this alteration the breadth of the sanctum externally is as great as that of *maha-mandapa* or transept, and the plan thus becomes a large double cross, instead of the simpler and more beautiful single cross of the common plan. The recessed ceilings of this temple are singularly beautiful and most ingeniously varied. That of the transept, between the four central pillars, is a large circle with eight small richly cusped circles rising above it, each with its bold pendent drop from the centre, and the top closed by another elaborately carved circle, from which the pendent drop has unfortunately fallen. The ceiling of the *mandapa* or nave, is formed of four cusped squares placed diagonally, and closed by a similar square at top, each square having a rich pendent hanging from its centre. But the richness of the carvings is rivalled by the profusion of the sculptures, which have been inserted with the most liberal hand wherever a resting place could be found. There are ten groups on the walls of the transept, and each of its four pillars has eight projecting brackets for the reception of statues. The walls of the sanctum also are covered with sculptures, and there are no less than 226 statues inside the temple, and 646 outside, or 872 statues altogether, of which the greater number are from 2½ to nearly 3 feet in height. The interior is impossible to describe from the variety and multiplicity of its details. The plinth of the temple is formed of a succession of bold and deep mouldings, 13 feet in height, that slope rapidly upwards and give it a look of solid stability, which is in excellent keeping with the massive superstructure. Immediately above the plinth there are three broad belts of sculpture running completely round the temple. The principal groups are in the recesses between the pillars of the transept and sanctum. Above these there are several bands of projecting mouldings that completely encircle the temple and form cornices to the pillared balconies of the nave, transept, and sanctum. These are succeeded by more bands of sculptures, and small pillared recesses and numerous pinnacles, which are repeated again and again up to the top of the spire, which is formed of a large *amalaka* fruit surmounted by a bell-shaped ornament. The general effect of this gorgeous luxury of embellishment is extremely pleasing, although the eye is often distracted by the multiplicity of the details.

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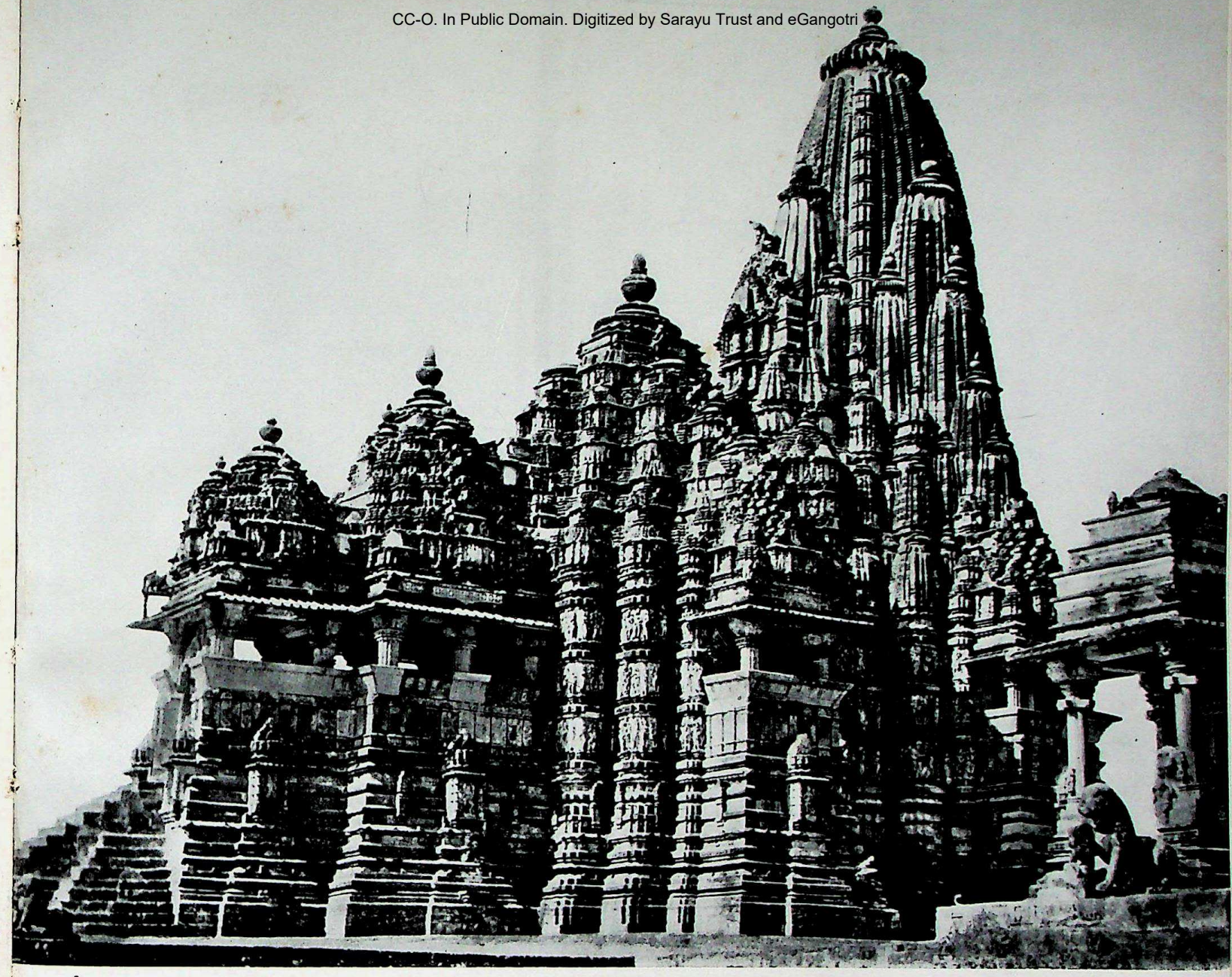

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3. *The Kandariya Mahadeva Temple*
(*photo by Raymond Burnier*)

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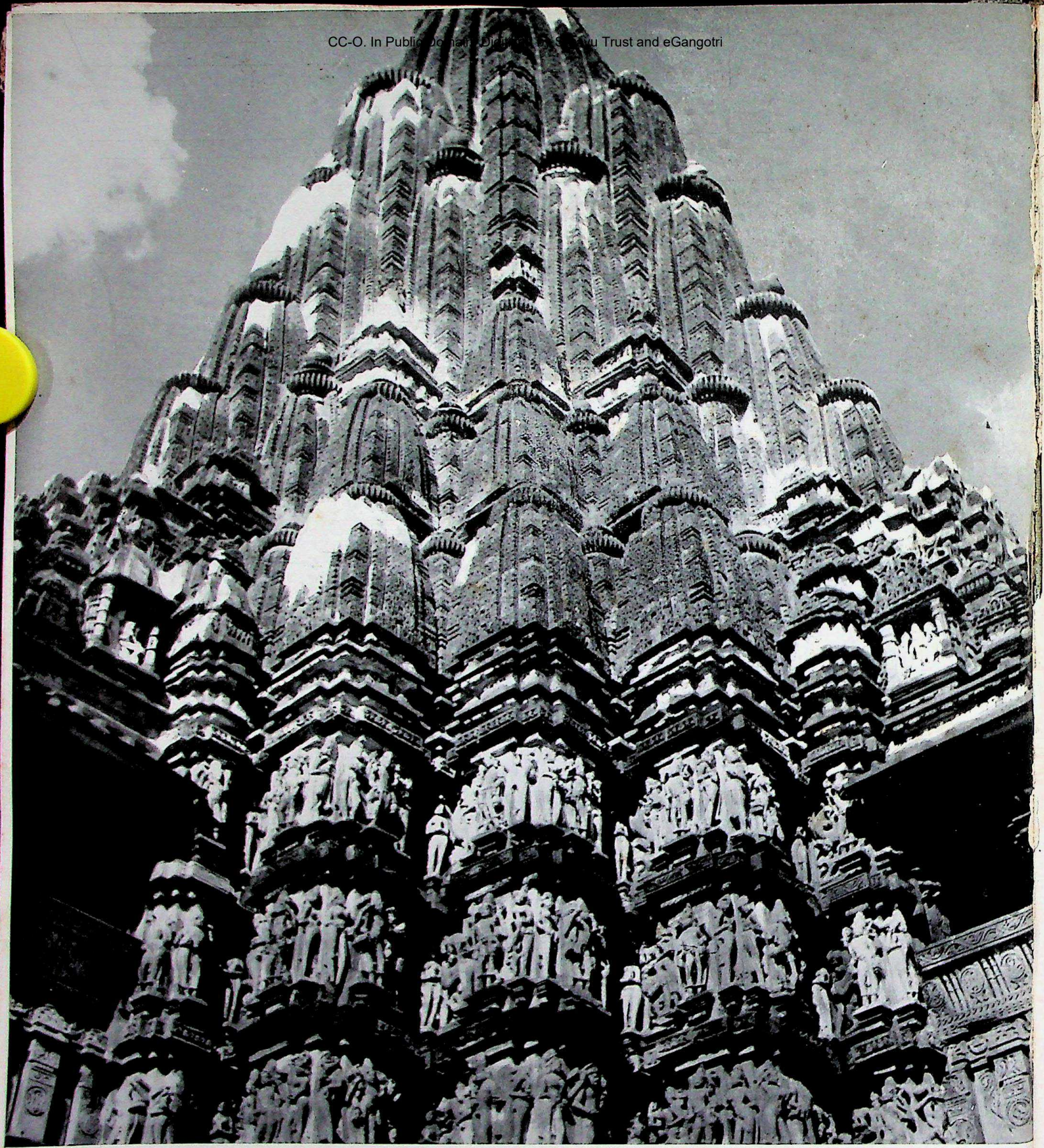

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4 *As the temple is the symbol of Mount Kailas or Mount Meru, the abode of the Gods, the vision of the worshipper ascends above the sculptured bands to the peak or the Sikhara, suggesting the flight to the vertical heights of the Himalayas: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

5. *Playing with a ball: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

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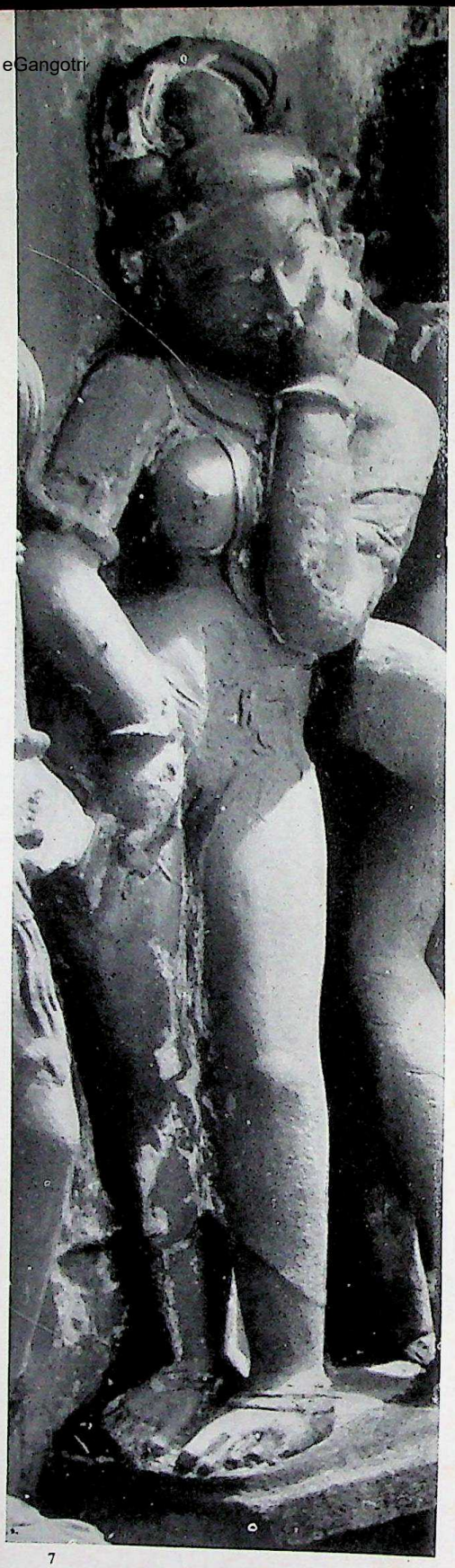
6. *A thorn in the flesh: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*



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7, 8 & 9. *These three Surasundaris express various aspects of modesty. The first figure is like a shy bride, afraid to enter the room of her lover, the second a mature woman turning her face away in an attitude into which the sculptor has infused a sense of drama; and the third, a young girl, is the embodiment of innocence with her half open eyes shielded by her demure hand. All these three are carved in rhythmic stances as though they are about to move: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photos by D. H. Sahiar)*

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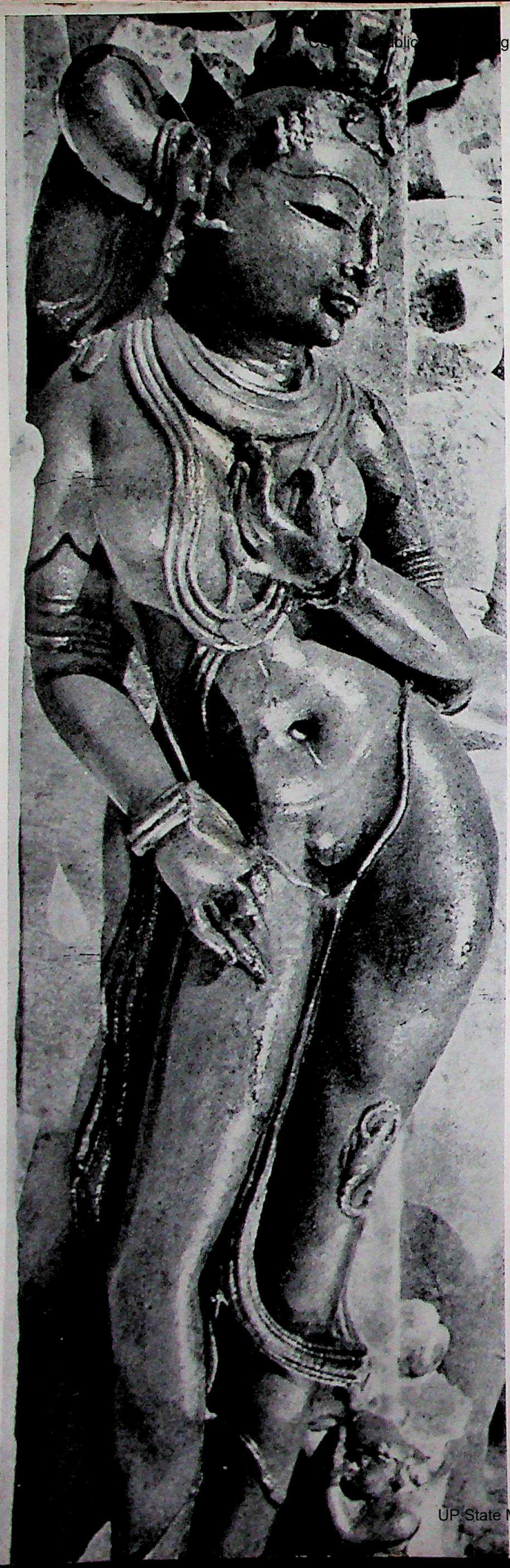

10. *Surasundari with a symbolic scorpion on her leg. This nymph, just emerging from her bath, pauses for a moment with her hand on her breast apparently on hearing foot-steps beyond her. The serenity of her face is slightly disturbed though the leisurely bend of the body betokens a poise, which is the natural habit of her soul: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

11. *Surasundari: The image is that of a very young celestial beauty, a servant maid to the high purpose of the greater gods....Coltishly stubborn, she holds a gourd shaped vessel close to her body. A man or a gana squats at her feet and sips what little drink has inadvertantly flown down to him from the full vessel of her overwhelming bounty: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

12. *The full bloom of this celestial beauty compels her to see the reflection of her face in the mirror. Unselfconscious and calm, she attends to her toilet with a natural ease, which was sought to be sculptured by generations of craftsmen in the subsequent eras: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Harbans Chadda)*

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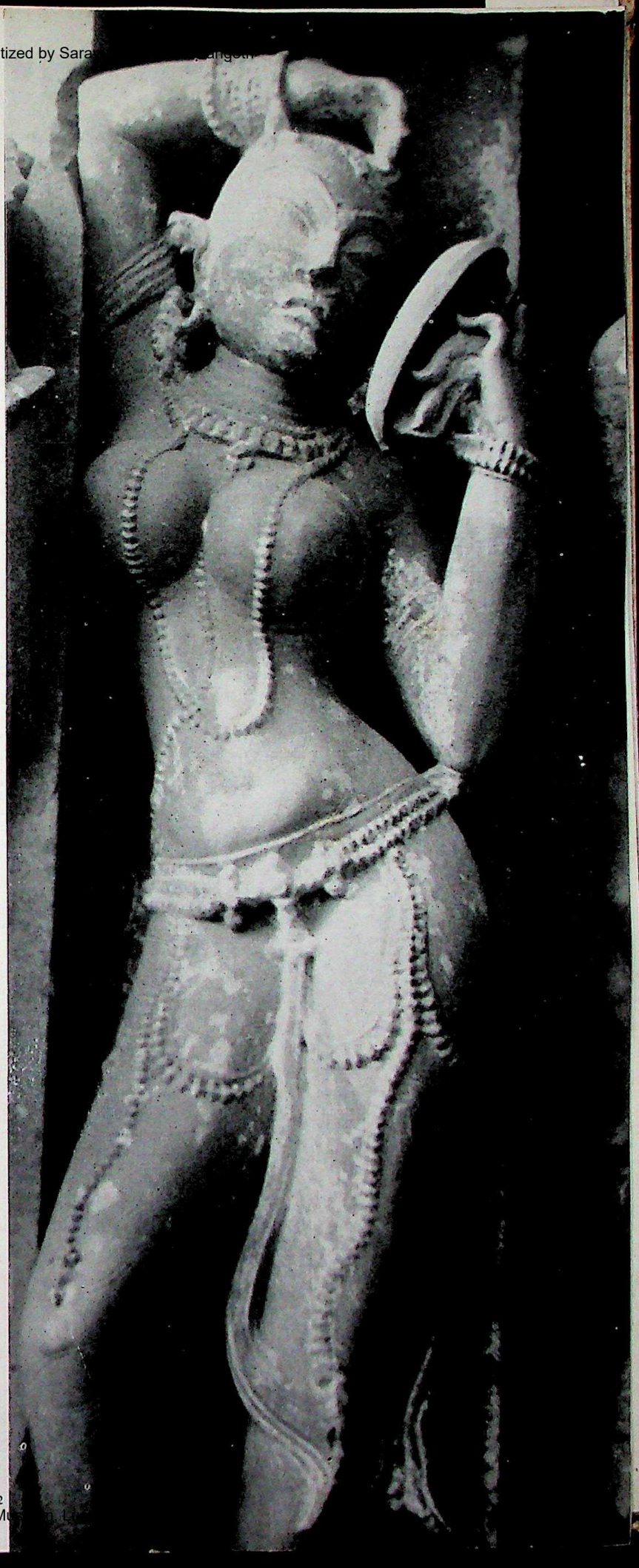

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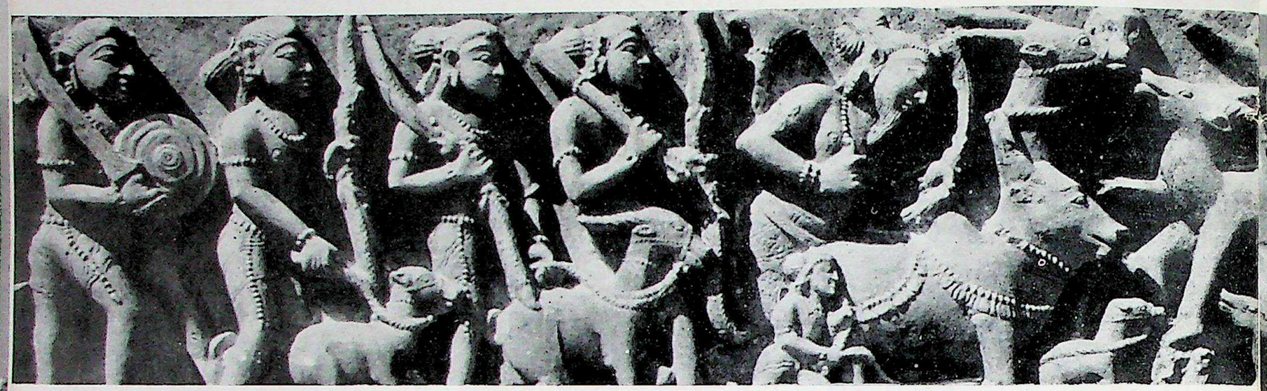

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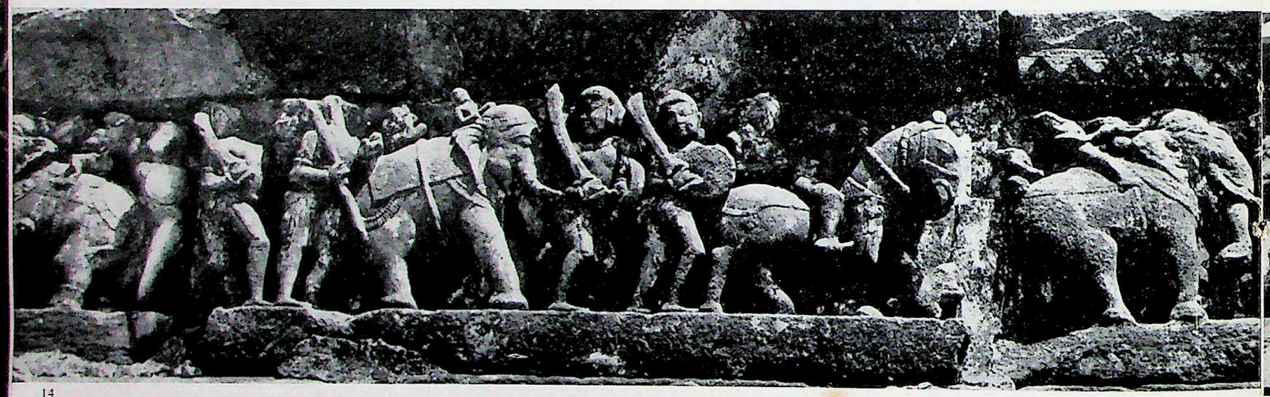

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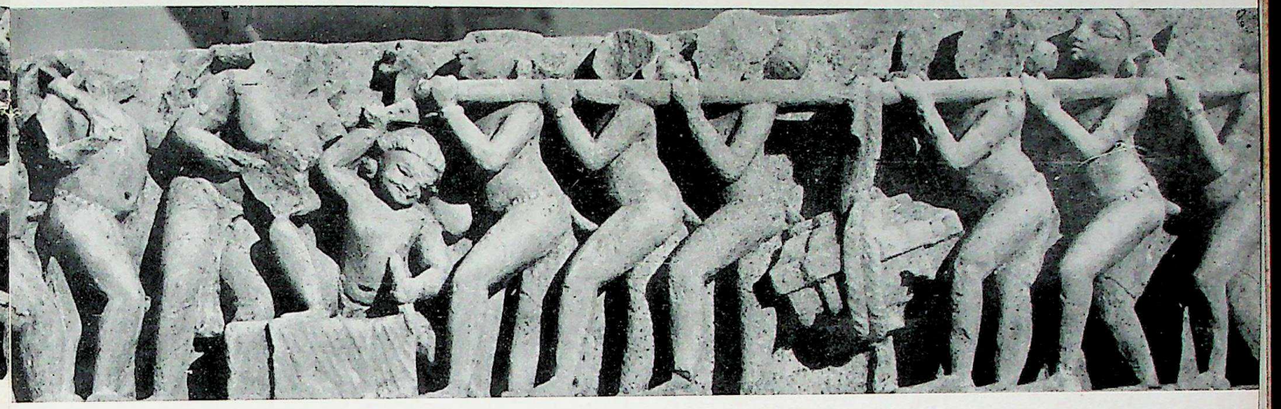
13. *On the way to hunt: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

14. *The call of war: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*



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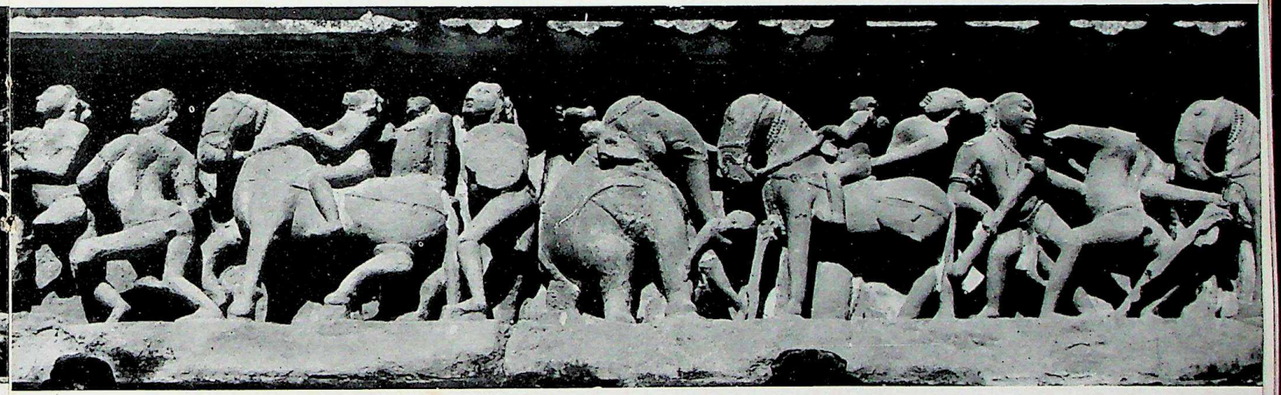

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15. *The passion of the Shilpin: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

16. *The thick of the fight: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

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17. *This orgistic scene presumably of the Hindu Kaula (noble) cults, in which the forms are held together by the unity evolved from the inner tension of desire, sublimated into a yogic trance: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar).*

18. *This sexual pose, which seems almost like a yoga exercise, is obviously one of the Kaula-Kapalika practices. The serenity of the male figure standing on his head and the acceptance by the maids assisting the conjugation, would suggest a ritualistic performance, noble perhaps for the difficulty of the pose and inevitably practised only by accomplished adepts: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Desmond Burnier).*

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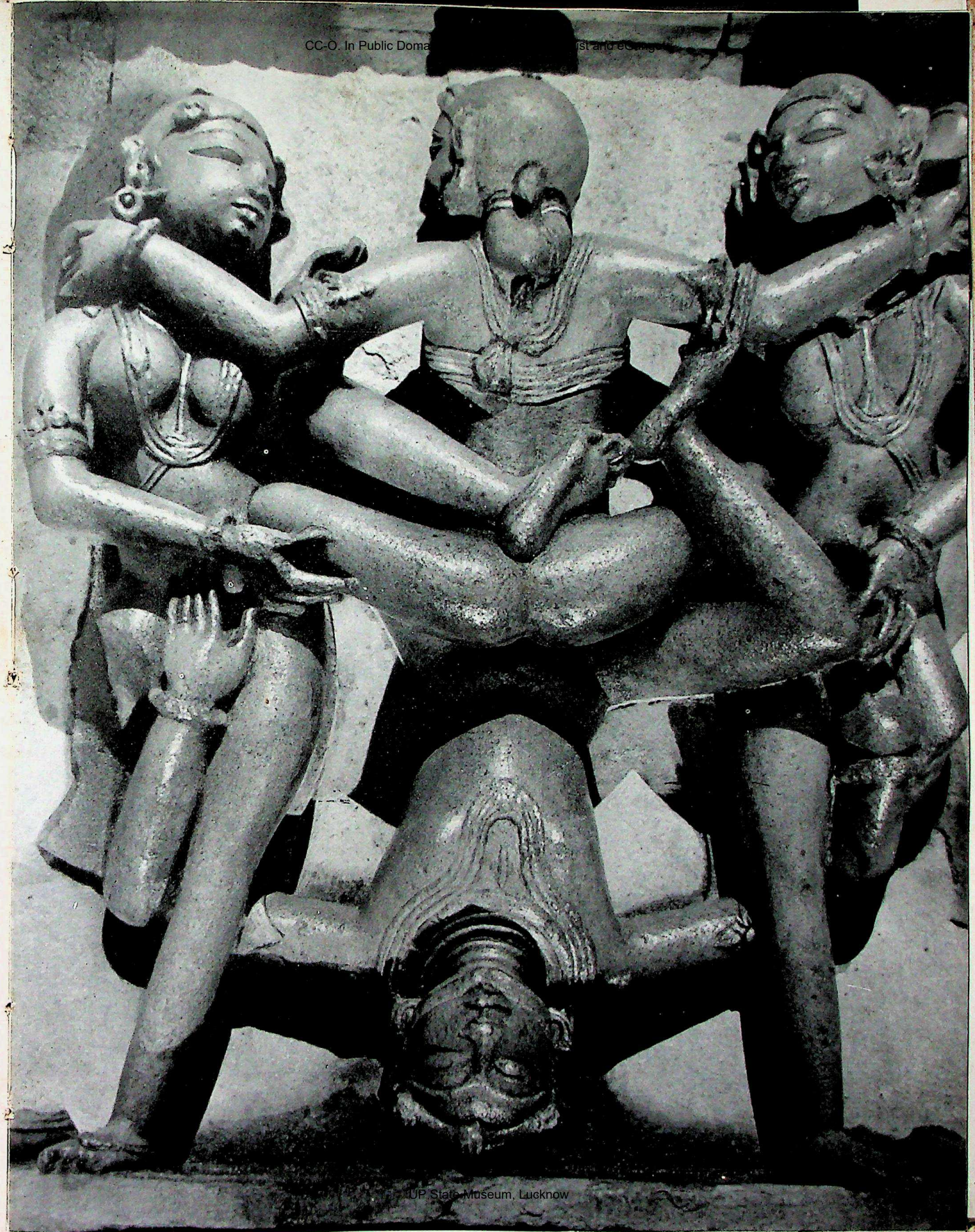

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19. *Surasundari with a mirror: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

20. *Surasundari: The anguish on the face of this nymph is one of the rare representations of sadness in Khajuraho. Because the moods generally represented in these temples are those of happiness, not hedonistic but radiating the elevated calm of refined pleasures: Chitragupta Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

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21. *Tenderly merge the bodies into each other: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

22. *The Union of Cosmic principles: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by D H. Sahiar)*

23. *Obviously a ritualistic ceremony in which the conjugating couple are lay figures in the embrace recommended by the priest with the symbolic staff on his shoulder. The lady on the side, also uninitiated, bashfully hides her nudity: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

24. *Tenderness in love: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier).*

20

Devi Jagadamba Temple

A large temple to the north of the last, 77 feet in length by 49½ feet in breadth, is now known by the name of *Devi Jagadamba*, or "the goddess-mother of the world". It was originally dedicated to Vishnu, as his figure occupies the centre of the entrance to the sanctum, with the figures of Siva and Brahma to the right and left. Inside the sanctum there is a very elaborate standing statue, 5 feet 8 inches in height, of a four-armed female who, as she is represented holding lotus flowers, must be intended for Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu. It is very probable, therefore, that this figure may have been the original goddess of the shrine, and consequently that the name of Devi Jagadamba may be the correct one. The temple consists of only four chambers, the *ardha-mandapa* or small entrance hall, being omitted, or perhaps lost, and the open passage round the sanctum which is found in the Kandariya temple. Its plan, however, is more beautiful than that of the larger temple, while its ornamentation is equally rich and elaborate. It has the same three rows of sculptures on the outside immediately above the plinth. There is no inscription of any kind, but a few mason's marks of single letters show that this temple must have been built in the tenth or eleventh century, during the most flourishing period of the Chandela rule.

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Vishwanatha Temple

Vishwanatha, or the 'Lord of the Universe', is a title of Siva, and is most probably the original name of the temple, as there is a figure of Siva seated on his bull, Nandi, over the centre of the entrance to the sanctum, with figures of Brahma on his goose, and of Vishnu on his eagle, to the right and left. Inside the shrine also there is a *lingam* of Siva, and most of the principal groups, both of the interior and exterior, have reference to Siva and his consort. The large central groups of the outside are like those of the other temples, purposely exposing their persons. Outside there are the usual three bands of sculptures immediately above the plinth, and the same profuse accumulation of mouldings, sculptures and pinnacles as in the Kandariya temple. Altogether there are 602 statues from 2 to 2½ feet in height, in the different ranges of sculpture of this gorgeous temple.

Chitragupta Temple

The Chitragupta temple continues the technique, evolved in the Lakshmana temple, of adorning the waist of the shrine with bands of the sculptural girdle. The integration of the decoration with plastic principles is not so complete here, but one of the stages of transformation of architectural form to structural form was achieved.

Lakshmana Temple

The Lakshmana or the Chatarbhuj temple standing near the Kandariya Mahadeva is important for the innovation of the bands of plastic decorations which began to be used around the waist of the temples. These bands were reminiscent of the triple girdles which decorate the beautiful Apsaras in Indian Sculpture. This system of plastic embellishment in horizontal strips, begun in the Lakshmana temple, was to be continued in the Devi Jagadamba temple. From here on, architecture begins to assume more and more the form of sculpture as in the Gothic Cathedral of France.

Duladeo Temple

The Duladeo temple is about a mile and a half away from the main Khajuraho Group. It is important for its exquisitely carved bracket capitals. The effigy of the four-armed *Gana*, with a conch shell, almost flying away from the column is a beautiful example of carving. The pillars in Khajuraho temples served a structural function for supporting the shaded balconied windows, but the ingenious sculptures transformed the brackets of these capitals into pleasing projections of form with a seemingly logical inevitability.

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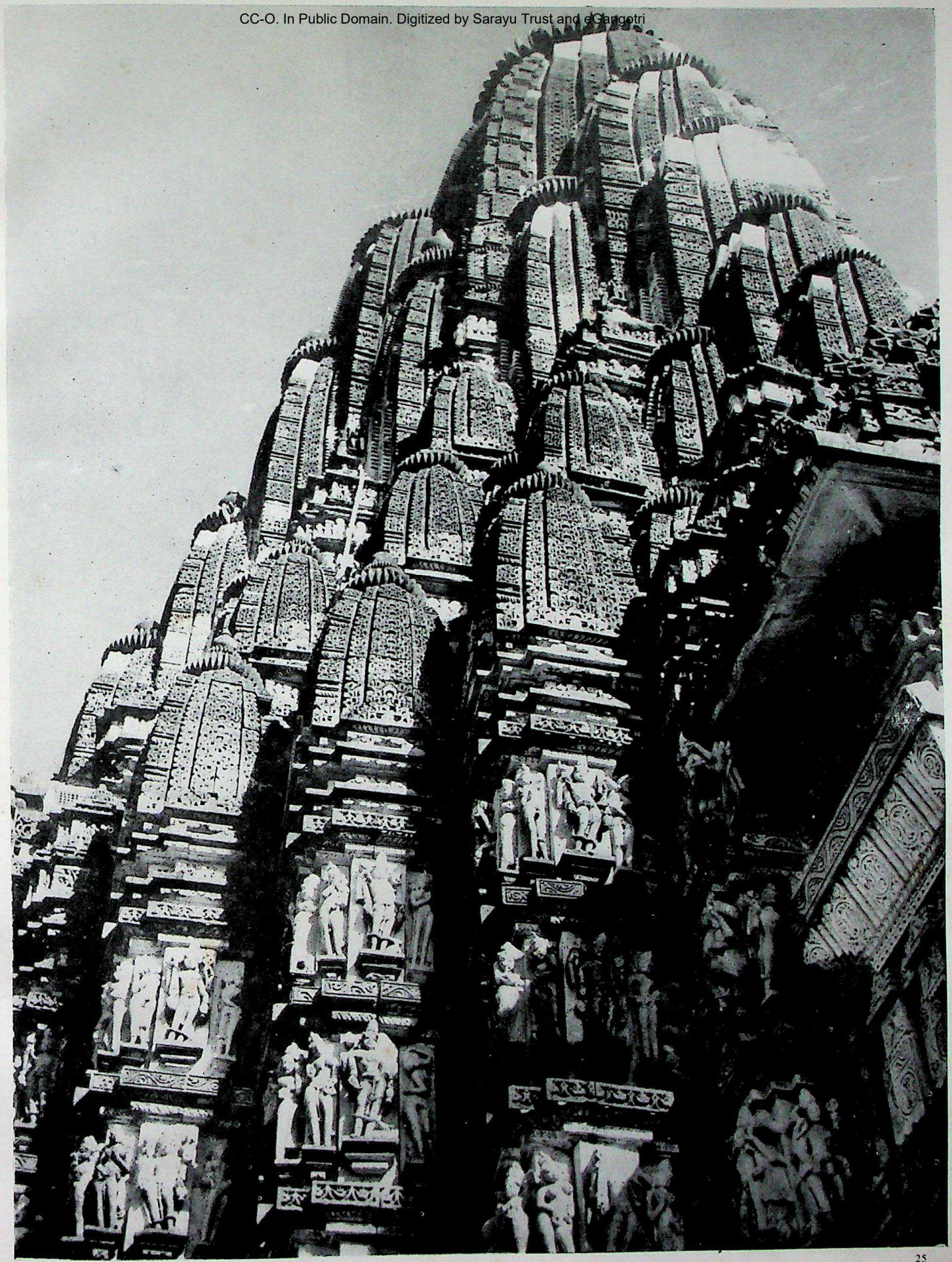

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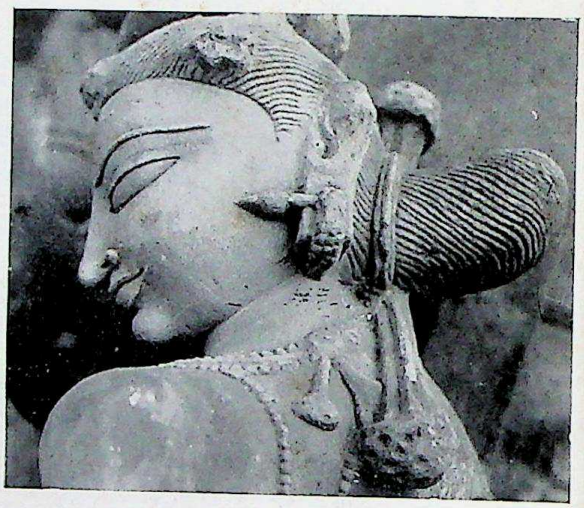
25. *Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

26. *Wringing her hair: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D H. Sahiar)*

27. *Surasundari: A happy nymph, radiating a gentle smile, evasive as though she suddenly stops and thinks of a souvenir from the past: Chitragupta Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

28. *A prayer to the Gods: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*



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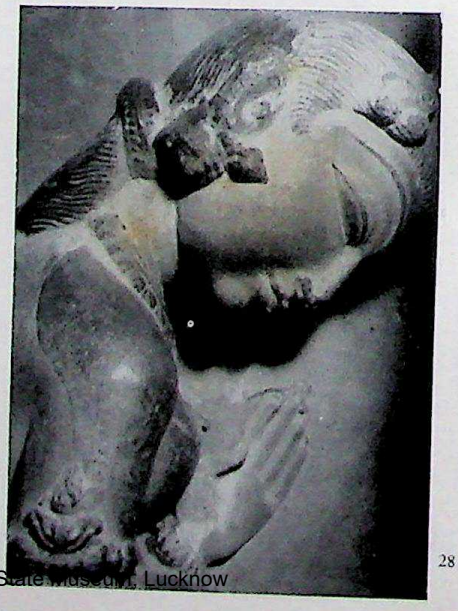

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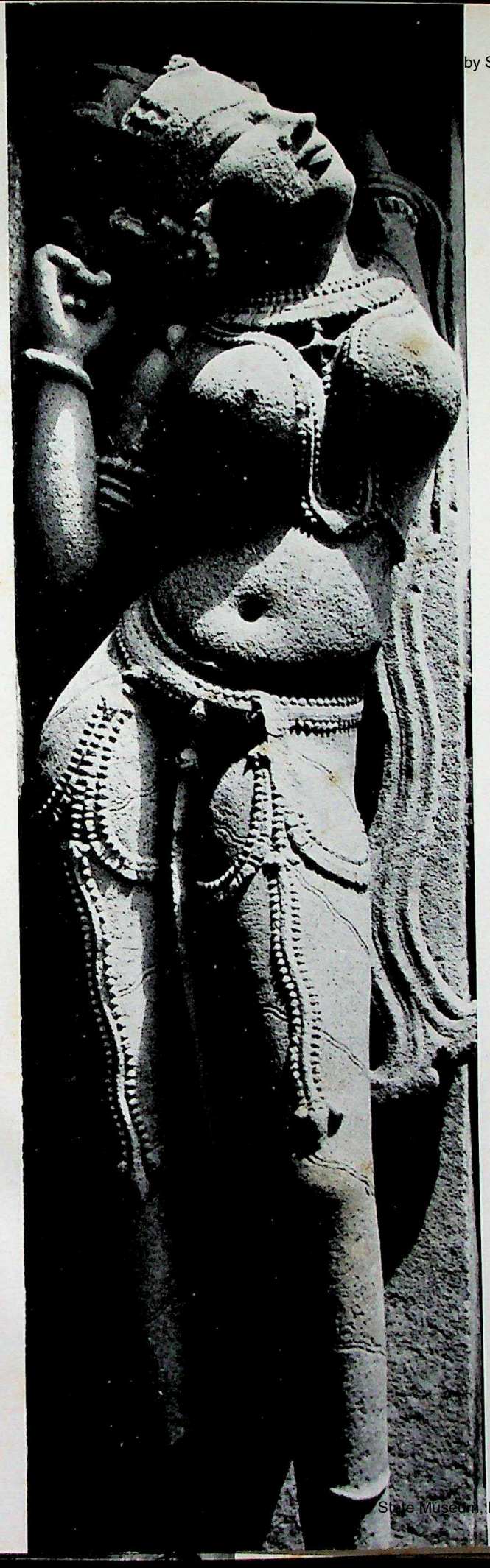

29. *Awakening from the sleep of the night: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

30. *A love letter: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

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31. *After the bath: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

32. *Surasundari: This beauty seems to be involved in the rhythm of her gracefully curved body: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

33. *This flute player with her face turned towards the shrine seems rapt in the lyric tune that will forever emerge from her lips: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

34. *Surasundari: She is in an impatient mood, as though she is a trifle upset by some accident. The sculptor has related the twist of the face with the corresponding twist of the arms: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

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35. *The Kiss: One of the many aspects of the divine is the physical union between the male and the female, because just as desire arose in the One and He became many, so desire arises in the many to become One: Chitragupta Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

36. *The sage Vatsyayana mentions in his Kama Sutra sex union among a couple of husbands and their wives taking place in one act of orgy. He thinks that great friendship and intimacy among the couples is necessary, because exchange may take place. The Kaula or Kapalika cults of Shaivism, apparently exalted the orgies of union into ceremonies where the undertone of human modesty was gently transformed into religious frenzy. Some commentators still think orgies debased, but the sex literature at that age seems to show that the practices were common currency: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

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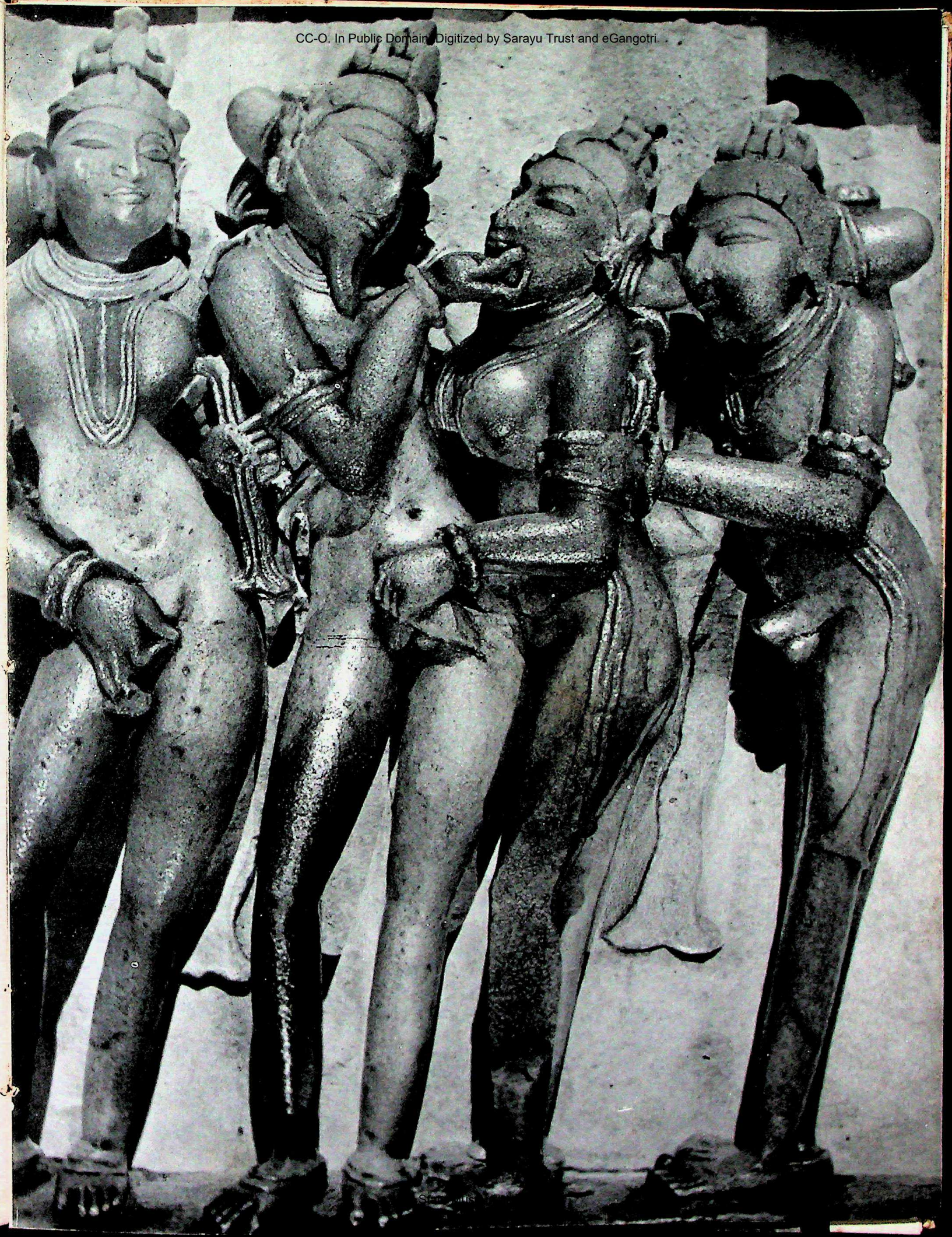

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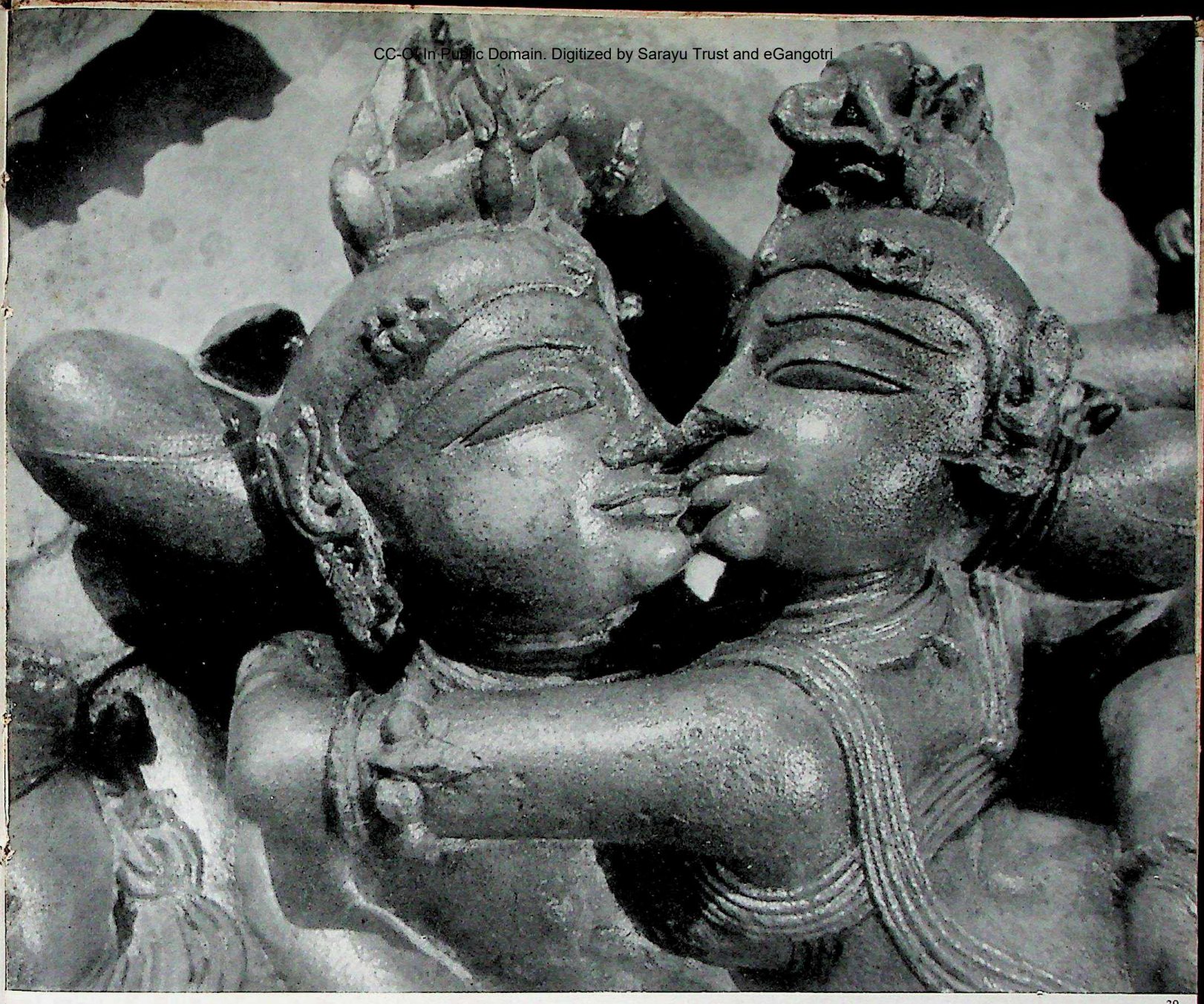

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37. *A woman frightened of a monkey clings to her lover, while he tries to drive the animal away with a crook. This is one of the most tender scenes depicted in Khajuraho, showing an aspect of the ordinary life of the time from a romantic angle which elevates the incidental and the purely human into the poetry of stone: Lakshmana Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

38. *Scratching the back during the bath: Lakshmana Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

39. *The Kiss: Lakshmana Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

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40. *The dancer with two torches and a flute player: Duladeo Temple (photo by Harbans Chadda)*

41. *The string instrument: Duladeo Temple (photo by Harbans Chadda)*

42. *The drummer: Duladeo Temple (photo by Harbans Chadda)*

42

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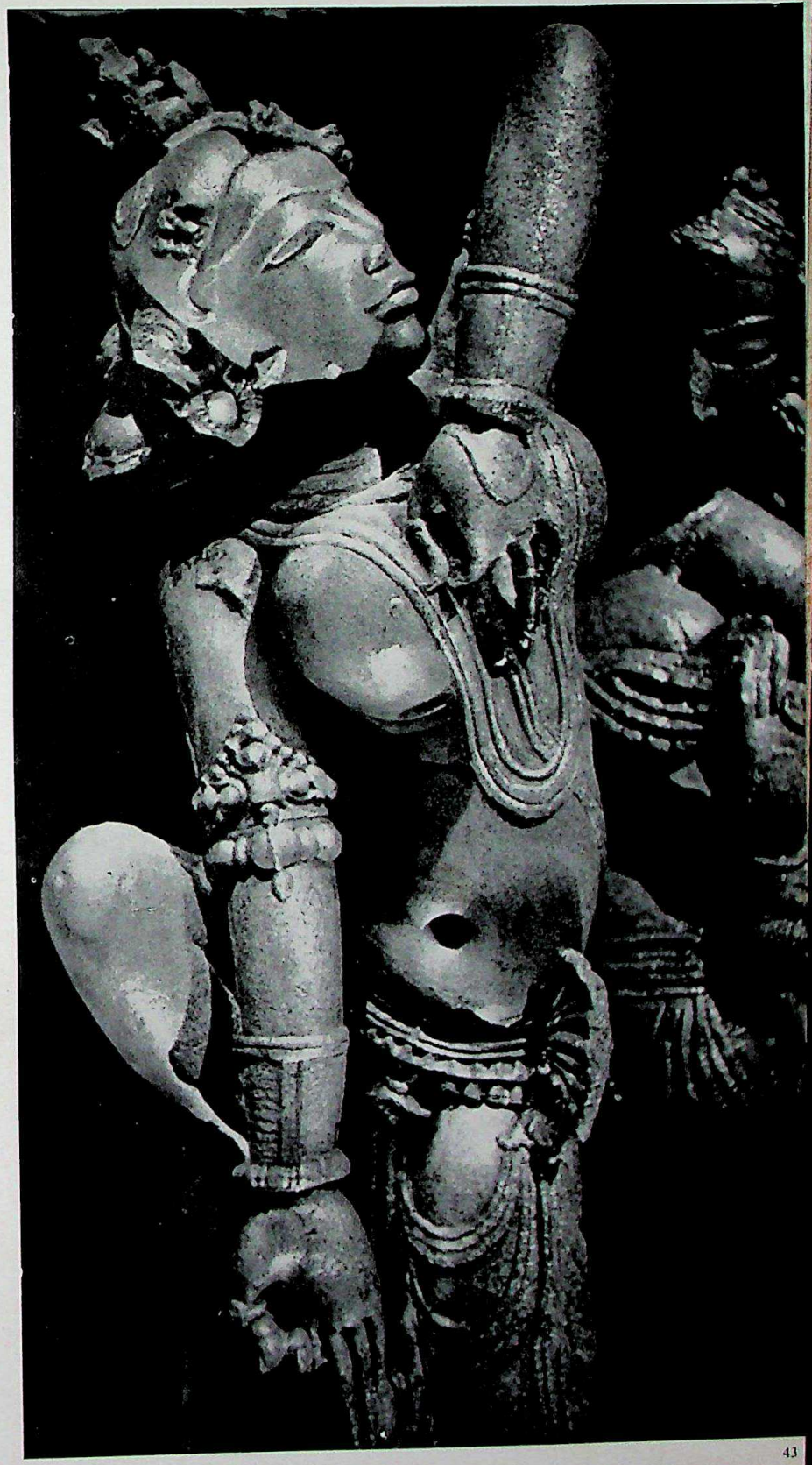
Adinatha Temple

A small ancient Jain temple, now dedicated to *Adinatha*, stands next to the *Parswanatha*. On the outside there is a single row of figures, including some naked females, but there is nothing remarkable either in the design of the temple, or in the enshrined figure of *Adinatha*. There are, however, many Jain statues, both whole and broken, collected about these temples that are specially interesting and valuable for their dated inscriptions. The mention of the sculptor's name is curious and useful, as it serves to fix the age of other undated statues which bear his name. There are no less than three different sculptors' names amongst these Chandela inscriptions.



43. *A pose in a classical dance: Adinatha Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

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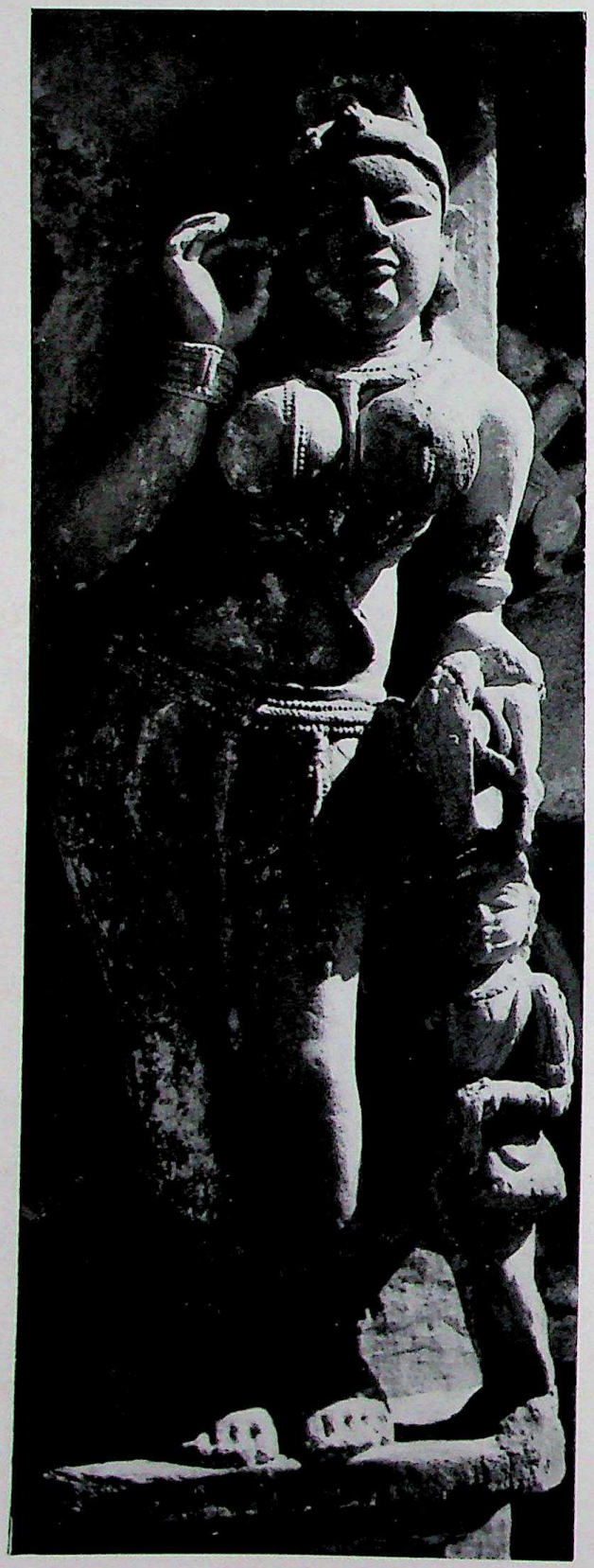

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Parswanatha Jain Temple

During the century of development from the earlier groups of Hindu temples to the Jain group, there has been an advance towards compactness and order. The onrush of romantic feeling, leading to exuberance, has been somewhat cooled by experience. And although the Jain religion seems to have absorbed, in these periods, almost all the gods of the Hindu pantheon, there is in the carving a certain restraint which is classic rather than emotional.

A small ancient temple, which has been restored in modern times, as a shrine of *Parswanatha*, the 22nd of the Jain pontiffs, stands south of the Khajuraho village. The portion now remaining, which appears to be only the sanctum of the original temple, has a naked male figure on the left side of the door, and a naked female figure on the right side, with three seated female figures over the centre. Inside there is a small seated figure of *Parswanatha*, which gives its name to the temple. Outside, the building is ornamented with three rows of small statues, of which those of the two lower rows are standing, and those of the uppermost row either sitting or flying. On the jambs of the door there are three short records of pilgrims in characters of the tenth or eleventh century, which is the most probable date of the original temple.

44. *The smear of black surma on the eye lashes: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

45. *Paraswanatha Temple (photo by S. Tata)*

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46. *In the evening beats the drum and the lovely damsel puts on her gunghru bells: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

47. *Agni: This sculpture of an honoured god derives its human feeling from the knot of the long tapering beard. Apparently the craftsmen could laugh at the gods even when disciplined to a code by the Shilpa-Shastra: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

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48. *Surasundari: This plump girl is a study of the sculptor's art at the highest level. The modelling of the face, with the almost amused expression in relation to the gentle manner of the hands extracting the thorn from her foot, shows the leisurely grace of the village woman used to walking in the nearby forests where thorny bushes still abound: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

49. *Siva-Parvati: There is no image of Siva-Sakti even in the Hindu temples which shows the tenderness between the God and the Goddess so sensitively as this sculpture. Surely a masterly rendering of the divine pair in their state of complete conjugal acceptance of each other, he with his condescension, leaning towards her, even as he protectively puts his arms around her; she, fresh from the elaborate toilet holding the mirror in her hand and looking up to him, as the eternal seductive female. The powerful attraction of the male and the female is held throughout by the sculptor between them: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

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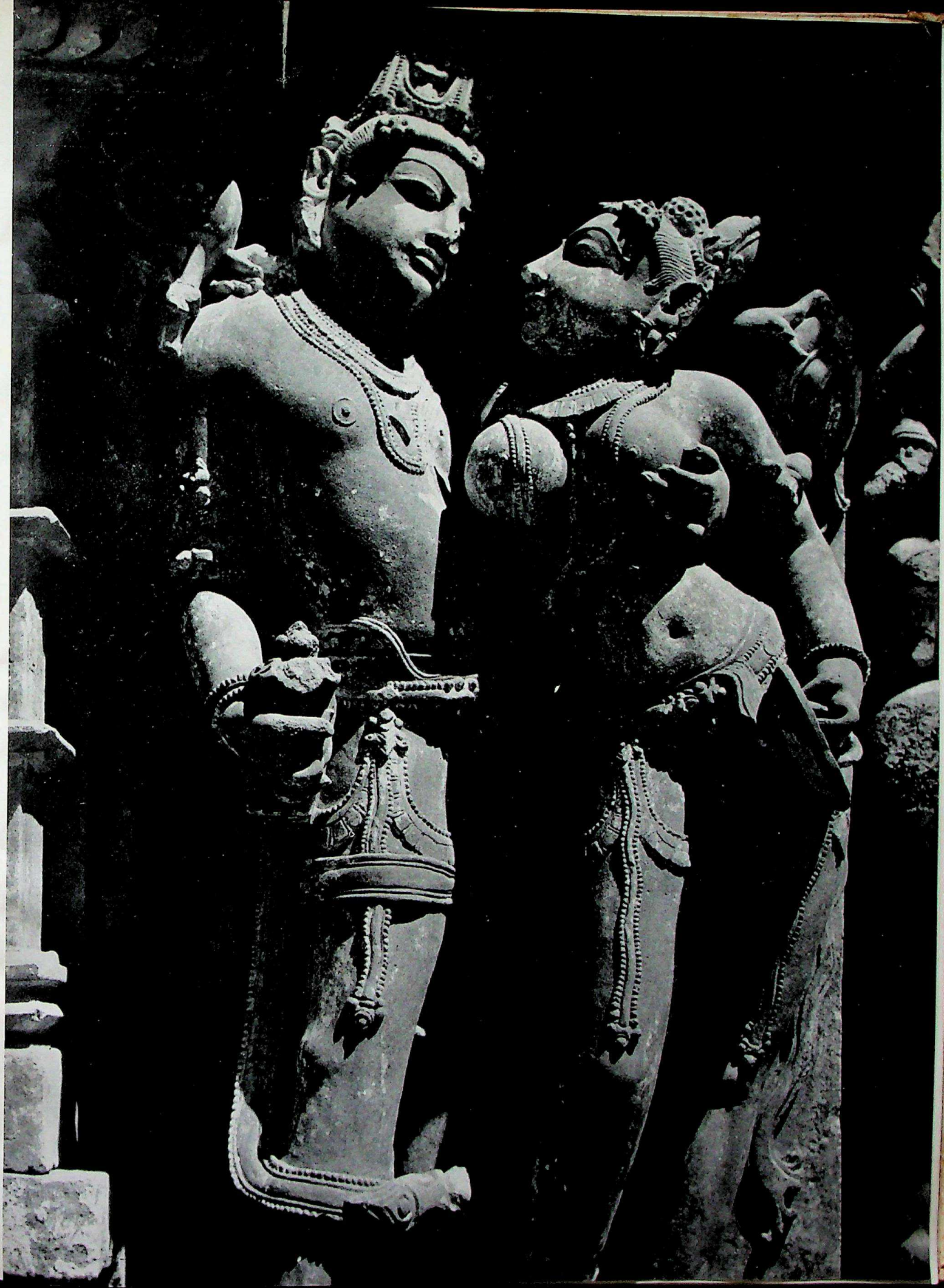

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Shrines in the Landscape of the Absolute

(A Brief Historical Note)

The ancient city of Khajuraho, the capital of the Chandela Rajputs, is situated 34 miles to the South of Mahoba, 27 miles to the east of Chhatrapur, and 25 miles to the north-west of Panna. It is inserted in sheet No. 70 of the Indian Atlas as Kujrow, in north latitude 24° 51′, and east longitude 80°, just 4 miles to the south of Rajnagar, and within 8 miles of the west bank of Kane River.

The earliest mention of this capital by name is by Abu Rihan, who accompanied Mahmud in his campaign against Kalinjar in A.D. 1022. He calls it Kajurah, the capital of Jajahuti, and places it at 30 *parsangs*, or about 90 miles, to the south-east of Kanoj. The true direction, however, is almost due south, and the distance about twice 30 *parsangs*, or 180 miles. The next mention of Khajuraho is by Ibn Batuta, who visited it about A.D. 1335. He calls it Kajura, and describes it as having a lake about one mile in length, which was surrounded by idol temples. These are still standing, and form, perhaps, the largest group of costly Hindu temples, now to be found in Northern India.

The earliest mention of the province is by Hiuen Tsang in A.D. 641. He calls it Chi-chi-to, or Jajhoti, and places the capital at 1,000 li, or 167 miles, to the north-east of Ujjain. The bearing is sufficiently accurate, but the distance is about double 1,000 li, or upwards of 300 miles, whether we take Mahoba or Khajuraho to have been the chief city at the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit. He describes the capital as being 15 or 16 li, or upwards of 2½ miles in circuit, and the people as being mostly heretics or worshippers of the gods. There were many dozens of monasteries, but only a few monks, while there were about 1,000 Brahmans attached to 12 temples. The king himself was a Brahman, but a staunch Buddhist. The country was famous for its fertility, and was much frequented by learned men from all the parts of India.

From these accounts of Hiuen Tsang and Abu Rihan, it is evident that the province of Jajhoti corresponded with the modern district of Bundelkhand, in its widest extent. The Chinese pilgrim states that the province was 4,000 li, or 667 miles, in circuit, which would form a square of about 167 miles to each side. Now, Bundelkhand in its widest extent, is said to have originally comprised all the country to the south of the Jumna and Ganges, from the Betwa River on the west, to the temple of Vindhya Vasini Devi, near Mirzapur, on the east, including the districts of Chanderi, Sagar, and Bilhari, near the sources of the Narbada on the south. But these are also the limits of the ancient country of the Jajhotiya Brahmans, which, according to Buchanan's information, extended from the Jumna on the north to the Narbada on the south, and from Urcha on the Betwa River in the west to the Bundela Nala on the east. The last is said to be a small stream which falls into the Ganges near Banaras, and within two stages of Mirzapur. The Jajhotiya

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Brahmans are distributed over the whole province, but there is not a single family to the north of the Jumna or to the west of the Betwa. They are at Barwa Sagar near Urcha on the Betwa, at Mohda near Hamirpur on the Jumna, at Rajnagar and Khajuraho near the Kane River, and at Udaipur, Pathari and Eran, between Chanderi and Bhilsa. In Chanderi itself there are also Jajhotiya Baniyas, which alone is almost sufficient to show that the name is not a common family designation, but a descriptive term of more general acceptance. The Brahmans derive the name of Jajhotiya from *Yajur-hota*, an observance of the *Yajur-Veda*; but as the name is applied to the Baniyas, or grain-dealers, as well as to the Brahmans, it is almost certain that it must be a mere geographical designation derived from the name of their country, Jajhoti. This opinion is confirmed by other well-known names of the Brahmanical tribes, as Kanojiya from Kanoj, Gaur from Gaur, Sarwariya or Sarjupariya from Sarju-par, the opposite bank of the Sarju River; Dravira from Dravira, in the Dakhan, Maithila from Mithila, etc. These examples are sufficient to show the prevalence of geographical names amongst the divisions of the Brahmanical tribes, and as each division is found numerously in the province from which it derives its name, we can conclude with some certainty that the country in which the Jajhotiya Brahmans preponderate must be the actual province of Jajhoti.

As the Raja of Jajhoti was a Brahman at the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit, we have a limit to the rise of the Chandela dynasty, by which we can correct the dates of the local annalists of the earlier dynasty of Jajhotiya Brahmans. There are no traditions whatever, and the only remains that we can attribute with any certainty to this period are a single pillared temple, No. 21, called Ganthai, and a high mound, No. 28, which is most probably a ruined monastery. But there are several other ruined mounds to the north and east of the village of Khajuraho, which are most probably the remains of some of the monasteries mentioned by Hiuen Tsang. We infer that the Ganthai temple was of the Buddhist building. There was found lying almost amongst the ruins outside the pedestal, a colossal draped figure inscribed with the well-known formula of the Buddhist faith ; "*Ye dharma hetu prabhava,*" etc., in characters similar to those of the Sarnath inscription, which are generally assigned to the sixth or seventh century. Over the centre of the entrance to the sanctum there is a four-armed female figure of Dharma, the second member of the Buddhist the triad, and the passive agent of creation according to the earlier Buddhists, but the first person of triad, and the active creator of the universe according to materialistic doctrines of the later Buddhists. The high mound, No. 28, may be the remains of a Buddhist monastery, because we can trace the walls of many of the surrounding cells. Both the mound and the temple are close to the group of Jain temples; a proximity which has been observed in other places with the ancient Buddhist remains and the modern Jain temples.

Of the famous dynasty of Chandela Rajputs, the remains are more numerous and more interesting than those of any other ancient family. The remains of the powerful Gupta dynasty are more important, but they are at present confined almost entirely to coins and inscriptions,* while those of the Chandelas include some of the most magnificent and costly temples in Northern India.

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Khajuraho is a small village. Amongst the inhabitants there are single houses of seven different divisions of the Jajhotiya Brahmans, and eleven houses of Chandel Rajputs, the chief of whom claim descent from Raja Paramal Deo, the antagonist of the famous Prithvi Raj. The village is situated at the south-east corner of the Khajur Sagar or Ninora-Tal, which is about half a mile in length, and a quarter of a mile in breadth when full, but less than half of that width in the dry season. The village is surrounded on all sides by temples and ruins, but these are more thickly grouped in three separate spots on the west, on the north, and on the south-east. The western group which consists entirely of Brahmanical temples, is situated on the banks of Sib-Sagar, a narrow sheet of water, about three-quarters of a mile in length from north to south in the rainy season, but not more than 600 feet square during the dry season. It is three-quarters of a mile from the village, and the same distance from the northern group of ruins, and a full mile from the south-eastern group of Jain temples. Altogether the ruins cover about one square mile, but as there are no remains of any kind between the western group and the Khajur Sagar, the boundary of the ancient city could not have extended beyond the west bank of the lake. On the other three sides of the lake, the ruins are continuous, extending over an oblong space 4,500 feet in length from north to south, and 2,500 feet in breadth from east to west with a circuit of 14,000 feet or nearly 3-3/4 miles. This corresponds almost exactly with the size of the capital as recorded by Hiuen Tsang in A.D. 641, but at some later period the city of Khajuraho was extended to the east and south as far as Kurar Nala, when it had a circuit of not less than three-and-a-half miles. As Mahoba must have been about the same size as Khajuraho, it is doubtful which of the two was the capital at the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit. But as the very name of Mahoba or Mahotsava-nagara, the "city of the great jubilee," is specially connected with the rise of the Chandela dynasty, it is most probable that Khajuraho must have been the capital of the earlier dynasty of Jajhotiya Brahmans. It is, therefore almost certainly as old as the beginning of the seventh century : and if we may judge from the "many dozens of Buddhist monasteries" seen by the Chinese pilgrim in A.D. 641, its date must reach back to the first century of the Christian Era.

In describing the ruins of Khajuraho the want of fixed dates for the different temples altogether precludes any chronological arrangement. The relative ages of some of them are known, and there are no less than three large dated inscriptions in the western group of temples, but as two of them are in one temple, and as not one of them is, perhaps, in its original position, it is doubtful whether any one of them refers to the building in which it is now placed. It is clear, however, that they must belong to this group, as all the temples, except one, are evidently of about the same age, while the three inscriptions have a range of only 47 years, from A.D. 954 to 1001. The mass of the western group may be assigned with some certainty to the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D.

(This note by General Alexander Cunningham is added here, as it is the most exact short historical Survey yet available.)

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*Since the above note was written, a great wealth of Gupta Sculptures and terracottas has been found. (Editor)

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LIST OF PLATES

1. *Mohini looking in the mirror: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*
2. *Vishwa-karma. Architect of Heaven or Master-Builder: Attendant shrine of Lakshmana Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*
3. *The Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*
4. *As the temple is the symbol of Mount Kailas or Mount Meru, the abode of the Gods, the vision of the worshipper ascends above the sculptured bands to the peak or the Sikhara, suggesting the flight to the vertical heights of the Himalayass Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*
5. *Playing with a ball: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*
6. *A thorn in the flesh: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*
7. *8 & 9. These three Surasundaris express various aspects of modesty. The first figure is like a shy bride, afraid to enter the room of her love, the second a mature woman turning her face away in an attitude into which the sculptor has infused a sense of drama; and the third, a young girl, is the embodiment of innocence with her half-open eyes shielded by her demure hand. All these three are carved in rhythmic stances as though they are about to move: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*
10. *Surasundari with a symbolic scorpion on her leg. This nymph, just emerging from her bath, pauses for a moment with her hand on her breast apparently on hearing footsteps beyond her. The serenity of her face is slightly disturbed though the leisurely bend of the body betokens a poise, which is the natural habit of her soul: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*
11. *Surasundari. The image is that of a very young celestial beauty, a servant-maid to the high purpose of the greater gods....Coltishly stubborn, she holds a gourd-shaped vessel close to her body. A man or a gana squats at her feet and sips what little drink has inadvertantly flown down to him from the full vessel of her overwhelming bounty: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*
12. *The full bloom of this celestial beauty compels her to see the reflection of her face in the mirror. Unselfconscious and calm, she attends to her toilet with a natural ease, which was sought to be sculptured by generations of craftsmen in the subsequent eras: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Harbans Chadda)*
13. *On the way to hunt: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*
14. *The call of war: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*
15. *The passion of the shilpin: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*
16. *The thick of the fight: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*
17. *This orgistic scene presumably of the Hindu Kaula (noble) cults, in which the forms are held together by the unity evolved from the inner tension of desire, sublimated into a yogic trance: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*
18. *This sexual pose, which seems almost like a yoga exercise, is obviously one of the Kaula-Kapalika practices. The serenity of the male figure standing on his head and the acceptance by the maids assisting the conjugation, would suggest a ritualistic performance, noble perhaps for the difficulty of the pose and inevitably practised only by accomplished adepts: Kandariya Mahadeva Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*
19. *Surasundari with a mirror: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*
20. *Surasundari: The anguish on the face of this nymph is one of the rare representation of sadness in Khajuraho. Because the moods generally represented in these temples are those of happiness, not hedonistic but radiating the elevated calm of refined pleasures: Chitragupta Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*
21. *Tenderly merge the bodies into each other: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*
22. *The Union of Cosmic principles: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*
23. *Obviously a ritualistic ceremony in which the conjugating couple are lay figures in the embrace recommended by the priest with the symbolic staff on his shoulder. The lady on the side, also uninitiated bashfully hides her nudity: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*
24. *Tenderness in love: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

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25. *Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

26. *Wringing her hair: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

27. *Surasundari: A happy nymph, radiating a gentle smile, evasive as though she suddenly stops and thinks of a souvenir from the past: Chitragupta Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

28. *A prayer to the Gods: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

29. *Awakening from the sleep of the night: Devi Jagadamba Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

30. *A love letter: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

31. *After the bath: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

32. *Surasundari: This beauty seems to be involved in the rhythm of her gracefully curved body (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

33. *This flute-player with her face turned towards the shrine seems rapt in the lyric tune that will for ever emerge from her lips: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

34. *Surasundari: She is in an impatient mood, as though she is a trifle upset by some accident. The sculptor has related the twist of the face with the corresponding twist of the arms: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

35. *The kiss: One of the many aspects of the divine is the physical union between the male and the female, because just as desire arose in te One and He became many, so desire arises in many to become one: Chitragupta Temple (photo by Moti Ram Jain)*

36. *The sage Vatsyayana mentions in his Kama-Sutra sex union among a couple of husbands and their wives taking place in one act of orgy. He thinks that great friendship and intimacy among the couples is necessary, because exchange may take place. The Kaula or Kapalika cults of Shaivism, apparently exalted the orgies of union into ceremonies, where the undertone of human modesty was gently transformed into religious frenzy. Some commentators still think orgies debased, but the sex literature at that age seems to show that the practices were common currency: Vishwanatha Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

37. *A woman freightened of a monkey clings to her lover, while he tries to drive the animal away with a crook. This is one of the most tender scenes depicted in Khajuraho, showing an aspect of the ordinary life of the time from a romantic angle which elevates the incidental and the purely human into the poetry of stone: Lakshmana Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

38. *Scratching the back during the bath: Lakshmana Temple (Photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

39. *The kiss: Lakshmana Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

40. *The dancer with two torches and a flute-player: Duladeo Temple (photo by Harbans Chadda)*

41. *The string instrument: Duladeo Temple (photo by Harbans Chadda)*

42. *The drummer: Duladeo Temple (photo by Harbans Chadda)*

43. *A pose in a classical dance: Adinatha Temple (photo by Raymond Burnier)*

44. *The smear of black surma on the eyelashes: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

45. *Parswanatha Temple (photo by S. Tata)*

46. *In the evening beats the drum and the lovely damsel put on her ghungru bells: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

47. *Agni: This sculpture of an honoured god derives its human feeling from the knot of the long tapering beard. Apparently the craftsmen could laugh at the Gods even when disciplined to a code by the Shilpa-Shastra: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

48. *Surasundari: This plump girl is a study of the sculptor's art at the highest level. The modelling of the face with the almost amused expression in relation to the gentle manner of the hands extracting the thorn from her foot, shows the leisurely grace of the village woman used to walking in the nearby forests where thorny bushes still abound: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

49. *Siva-Parvati: There is no image of Siva-Sakti even in the Hindu temples which shows the tenderness between the God and the Goddess so sensitively as this sculpture. Surely a masterly rendering of the divine pair in their state of complete conjugal acceptance of each other, he with his condescension, leaning towards her, even as he protectively puts his arm around her; she, fresh from the elaborate toilet holding the mirror in her hand and looking up to him, as the eternal seductive female. The powerful attraction of the male and the female is held throughout by the sculptor between them: Parswanatha Temple (photo by D. H. Sahiar)*

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